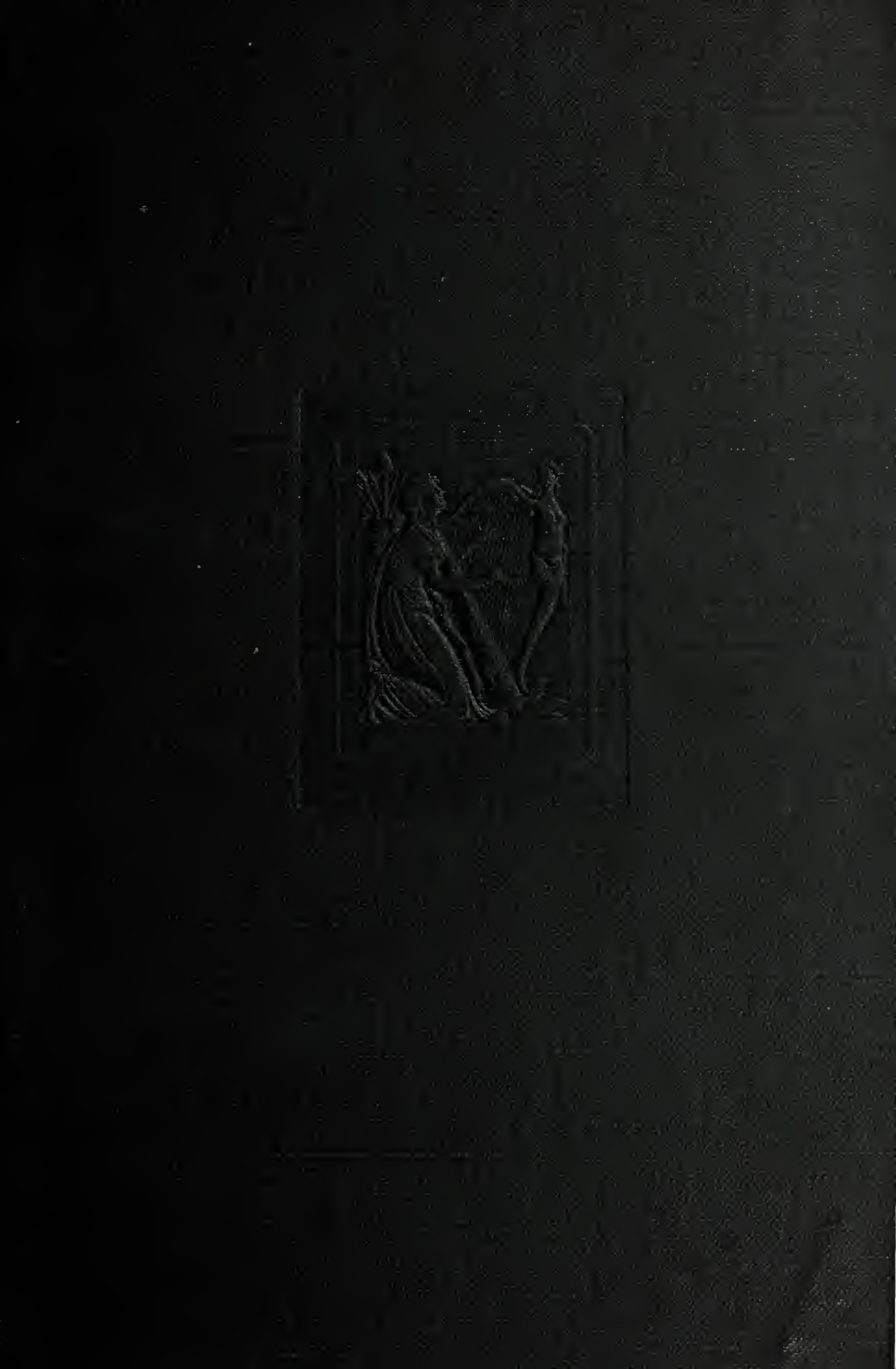

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THE
UNITED IRISHMEN
THEIR
LIVES AND TIMES

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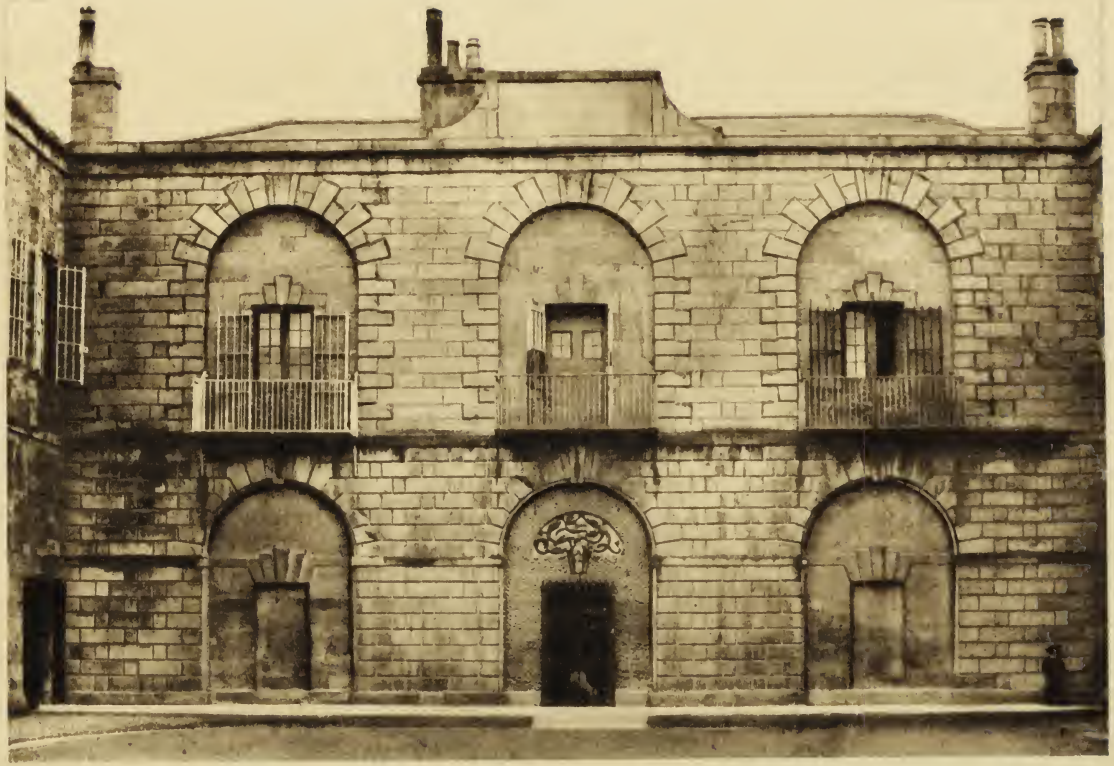

Newgate Prison. The Bastile of Dublin

The Place of Confinement of Many Irish Patriots. It was afterward Pulled Down on Account of its Infamous Notoriety. On the Site of the Old Prison there is To-day a Public Park

THE UNITED IRISHMEN

THEIR LIVES AND TIMES

BY

RICHARD ROBERT MADDEN

M.D., F.R.C.S., M.R.I.A.

NEWLY EDITED

WITH NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INDEX

BY

VINCENT FLEMING O'REILLY

NEW YORK

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UP FOR THE GREEN

An anonymous production, written in 1796 as a song for the United Irishmen. It was sung to the air "The Wearing of the Green."

'Tis the green—oh! the green is the colour of the true,
And we'll back it 'gainst the orange, and we'll raise it o'er the blue!
For the colour of old Ireland alone should here be seen—
'Tis the colour of the martyr'd dead—our own immortal green.
Then up for the green, boys, and up for the green!
Oh, 'tis down to the dust and a shame to be seen;
But we've hands—oh, we've hands, boys, full strong enough, I ween,
To rescue and to raise again our own immortal green!

They may say they have power 'tis vain to oppose—
'Tis better to obey and live, than surely die as foes;
But we scorn all their threats, boys, whatever they may mean;
For we trust in God above us, and we dearly love the green.
So, we'll up for the green, and we'll up for the green!
Oh, to *die* is far better than be curs'd as we have been!
And we've hearts—oh! we've hearts, boys, full true enough, I ween,
To rescue and to raise again our own immortal green.

They may swear, as they often did, our wretchedness to cure;
But we'll never trust John Bull again, nor let his lies allure.
No, we won't—no, we won't, Bull, for now nor ever more!
For we've hopes on the ocean, and we've trust on the shore.
Then up for the green, boys, and up for the green!
Shout it back to the Sassenach, "We'll *never* sell the green!"
For our Tone is coming back, and with men enough, I ween,
To rescue, and avenge us and our own immortal green.

Oh, remember the days when their reign we did disturb,
At Limerick and Thurles, Blackwater and Benhurb;
And ask this proud Saxon if our blows he did enjoy,
When we met him on the battlefield of France,—at Fontenoy.
Then we'll up for the green, boys, and up for the green!
Oh, 'tis still in the dust and a shame to be seen;
But we've hearts and we've hands, boys, full strong enough, I ween,
To rescue and to raise again our own unsullied green.

THE
UNITED IRISHMEN
THEIR
LIVES AND TIMES

John Philpot Curran

The Eminent Irish Orator and Counsel for the United Irishmen. After a Rare Engraving

MEMOIR OF ROBERT EMMET

CHAPTER X

SARAH CURRAN

THE story of "The Broken Heart" has made known the trials and afflictions of the object of Emmet's affection, wherever one of the most graceful books in miscellaneous literature, of our language, has found its way.

The following account of Sarah Curran's ill-fated attachment, conveys a better idea of it and its unhappy issue than any description of mine could possibly afford:

She loved him with the disinterested fervour of a woman's first and early love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him—when blasted in fortune, and disgrace and danger darkened around his name, she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings. If then his fate could awaken the sympathy even of his foes, what must have been the agony of her whose soul was occupied by his image? Let those tell who have had the portals of the tomb suddenly closed between them and the being they most

loved on earth—who have sat at its threshold as one shut out in a cold and lonely world, from whence all that was most lovely and loving had departed.

To render her widowed situation more desolate, she had incurred her father's displeasure by her unfortunate attachment, and was an exile from her paternal roof. But could the sympathy and offices of friends have reached a spirit so shocked and driven in by horror, she would have experienced no want of consolation; for the Irish are proverbially a people of quick and generous sensibilities. The most delicate and cherishing attentions were paid her by families of wealth and distinction. She was led into society, and they tried by all kinds of occupation and amusement to dissipate her grief and wean her from the tragic story of her love. But it was all in vain. There are some strokes of calamity that scathe and scorch the soul—that penetrate to the vital seat of happiness, and blast it, never again to put forth bud or blossom. She never objected to frequent the haunts of pleasure—but she was as much alone there as in the depths of solitude. She walked about in a sad reverie, apparently unconscious of the world around her. She carried with her an inward woe that mocked at all the blandishments of friendship, and "heeded not the song of the charmer, charm he never so wisely."

On the occasion of a masquerade at the Rotundo her friends brought her to it. There can be no exhibition of far-gone wretchedness more striking and painful than to meet it in such a scene; to find it wandering like a spectre, lonely and joyless, where all around is gay—to see it dressed out in the trappings

of mirth, and looking so wan and woe-begone, as if it had tried in vain to cheat the poor heart into a momentary forgetfulness of sorrow. After strolling through the splendid rooms and giddy crowd with an air of abstraction, she sat down on the steps of an orchestre, and looking about for some time with a vacant air that showed insensibility to the gayish scene, she began, with the capriciousness of a sickly heart, to warble a little plaintive air. She had an exquisite voice, but on this occasion it was so simple, so touching—it breathed forth such a soul of wretchedness—that she gathered a crowd, mute and silent, around her, and melted every one into tears.[1]

This was a mournful spectacle indeed. Imogen was unable to drag her misery into such scenes of gaiety—yet misery shows itself in various shapes, and not always in the saddest places. What heavy heart-sickness is breathed in the words addressed to the companions of Imogen:

> "So please you, leave me;
> Stick to your journal course—the breach of custom
> Is the breach of all. I am ill—but your being by me
> Cannot amend me; society is no comfort
> To one not sociable. I'm not very sick,
> Since I can reason of it. Pray you, trust me—
> I'll rob none but myself; and let me die,
> Stealing so poorly."

Who thinks of the young, heroic man who perished on the scaffold in 1803, and merged its ignominy in "the magnanimity" of his bearing (to use the term employed by the representative

[1] Washington Irving's story of "The Broken Heart."

of the sovereign in bearing testimony to the nobleness of mind which suggested one of the latest of his acts) ; who mourns over his fate, and while reminded of his errors separates his motives from them; who reads the story of Robert Emmet and does not recall the name of Sarah Curran, and all that is sad as well as beautiful that is associated with it?

Her brother tells us of the progress of Emmet's attachment, and of the period and occasion of his divulging it to her. A letter of the former to her father, and another to Mr. Richard Curran, "contain all that is to be told." Those letters, everybody feels, contain less than he desires to know of one who engaged the affections of Robert Emmet. The letter to the father was intended to give an appearance of a very recent and accidental origin to that attachment, and to conceal the extent to which his daughter's affections had been engaged. The object is obvious, and its delicacy no less apparent. That attachment was not of a very recent origin, nor was its ardour and enthusiasm all or chiefly on the side of Robert Emmet. During the whole period of his last residence in Dublin, after his return from the Continent, an active correspondence was carried on between him and Miss Curran. This correspondence, comprising what has been termed "a sheaf of notes and letters," fell into the hands of the Irish

Verres, Major Sirr. They remained long in his possession objects of *vertu,* classed with "rebellious papers," in that portion of the collection which was set apart for the antiquities of the year of blood and terror, that was marked with a white stone in the major's calendar, 1798.

The entire of those letters, it is stated on good authority, were burned by Major Sirr some years before his death, from compassionate feelings, it is said. The letters of the lady moved the major to pity—wonderful letters! Well might the writers of them have said, "What wreck discern you in me deserves YOUR pity?" It is needless to inquire into Sirr's motives for this act, as it is fruitless to lament the destruction of them. The major in destroying those papers has not destroyed the memory of Robert Emmet, nor diminished the mournful interest that is felt in everything that relates to Sarah Curran.

There is a reference to Emmet's correspondence with Sarah Curran in Grattan's memoirs.

Mr. Grattan, in his life of his father, mentions a remarkable circumstance connected with the execution of Robert Emmet, which rests on the authority of Peter Burrowes, a man of great integrity and truthfulness, that is not made mention of in any other account of Robert Emmet's last moments.

He was as cool and collected before his death as if nothing was to happen. Peter Burrowes saw him on

his way, and related a circumstance that occurred as he was going to execution. He had a paper that he wished to be brought to Miss Curran, to whom he was strongly attached; he watched his opportunity, and in passing one of the streets he caught a friendly eye in the crowd, and, making a sign to the person, got him near, and then he dropped a paper; this was observed by others, and the person who took it up was stopped; the paper was taken from him and brought to the Castle. Mr. Burrowes and Charles Bushe saw it, and said it was a very affecting and interesting letter.

This probably may be another version of the same occurrence which Mr. W. H. Curran makes mention of:

There were fine traits, too, in Emmet's character; the following was one of them. His attachment to Miss Curran was well known. When he was sent to prison for the outbreak in 1803, he took aside the gaoler, and gave him a letter for Miss Curran, and all the money he had about him, and begged that he would deliver it safe. The man, in the discharge of his duty, gave the letter to the attorney-general. Emmet found *this* out, and he immediately sent to government to say he had imprudently written such a letter; that it had come to their hands; he had thus injured an innocent and guiltless female; and knowing how much the government were afraid of his addressing the people at his execution, he begged of them to have the letter delivered, and that if they refused he would not fail to address the people, and would do so with greater de-

termination; but if they sent the letter he would agree to appear in court, plead guilty, and go to execution without saying a word. That was certainly a fine trait in his character. The letter related to politics as well as to love; and in it he mentions there was only one thing in the whole of his conduct with which he had (and justly) to reproach himself—that was his imprudence; and one great cause of his failure he attributed to the mildness of the government, which he termed their insidious moderation.[1]

Anne Devlin, in speaking of Emmet's residence at Harold's-cross, mentions her having been sent for to convey a letter to Miss Curran, but in a subsequent conversation she stated that she had been the bearer of several notes to Miss Curran, when he was living at Butterfield-lane. Another person, I am informed, frequently performed the same office, a sister of young Palmer of Thomas-street. Anne Devlin says that when she delivered a note to Miss Curran, "her face would change so, one would hardly know her." She remembered Miss Curran, she said, as well as if she was then standing before her; she was a person "whose face some way or another, the first time one ever laid their eyes on her, seemed to be known to one. You could not see Miss Curran, and not help liking her; and yet she was not handsome; but she was more than handsome." I described to her the person of a sister

[1] "Grattan's Life and Times," vol. xiv. p. 360.

of Miss Sarah Curran whom I had known in Italy upwards of twenty years ago, but she said there was no resemblance. "Miss Sarah was not tall, her figure was very slight, her complexion dark, her eyes large and black, and her look was the mildest, and the softest, and the sweetest look you ever saw."

From all that I have been able to learn of this young lady, she was one of the simplest-minded, freest from affectation, the most amiable and gentle of womankind; and yet there was no sacrifice she was not capable of making for the man she loved—there was no suffering she was not prepared to endure for his sake. Under all restraints, in all the trying circumstances and various positions she was placed in, it would seem that her fugitive, her imprisoned, her death-doomed, her buried, or her slandered and reprobated lover was ever present to her thoughts. "With all the resolution of strong faith, she had flung her youth, her hope, her beauty, her talent, upon his bosom, weighed him against the world, which she found but a feather in the scale, and taken him as an equivalent."

I know not where there is to be found a more touching and striking example of devoted fondness—of that kind of self-sacrificing fondness, of devoted fidelity to the object of affection, which carries abnegation to the farthest possible extent—than in the instance of the exercise of

the faith, fortitude, patience, and self-renunciation practically manifested by Sarah Curran.

It has been stated that Miss Curran had an interview with Robert Emmet the day before his execution. The statement is denied, I believe with truth, by every friend of Robert Emmet with whom I am acquainted. The only friend, or person presumed to be a friend of his, who visited him the day previous to his trial, or after his conviction, as I have previously observed, was Mr. Leonard M'Nally, the barrister. None of his fellow-prisoners were even permitted to take leave of him. But the morning of his execution there was a coach stationed at a short distance from the gaol, near the entrance to the Royal Hospital. A lady was seen in that coach by an associate of Robert Emmet, with her face buried in her handkerchief; and when the prisoner left the gaol, and the carriage in which he was placed approached the spot where the other vehicle was drawn up, Robert Emmet put his head out of the window, gazed intently at the person who was in it, waved his hand several times, and was continuing to do so till he was out of sight of the person who gave me this account. At the moment Robert Emmet passed, the lady referred to stood up in the carriage, waved her handkerchief, and sunk back on the seat. My informant was not near enough to the coach to discern her

features distinctly; she was a young person, and he believed it was Miss Curran.

Mr. W. H. Curran in his life of his father states, that on Emmet's arrest some papers were found on his person which showed that subsequently to the insurrection he had corresponded with one of Mr. Curran's family; a warrant accordingly followed, as a matter of course, to examine Mr. Curran's house, where some of Mr. Emmet's letters were found, which, together with the documents taken upon his person, placed beyond a doubt his connection with the late conspiracy, and were afterwards used as evidence upon his trial.

It is a matter of notoriety that at this period his house was searched, that he appeared himself before some members of the privy council, and that a rumour prevailed—to which his political enemies gave a ready credit, and as far as they could a confirmation—that he was personally implicated in the recent conspiracy.

. . . .

The projector of the late insurrection, Mr. Robert Emmet, who was a young gentleman of a highly respectable family, of very striking talents and interesting manners, was in the habit of visiting at Mr. Curran's house. Here he soon formed an attachment for his youngest daughter. Of the progress of that attachment, and of the period and occasion of his divulging it to her, Mr. Emmet's letters, inserted hereafter, contain all that is to be told. It is necessary however to add, as indeed will sufficiently appear from

those letters, that her father remained in total ignorance of the motive of Mr. Emmet's visits, until subsequent events made it known to all. To a man of his celebrity and attractive conversation there seemed nothing singular in finding his society cultivated by any young person to whom he afforded (as he so generally did to all) the opportunities of enjoying it. As the period, however, of the intended insurrection approached, Mr. Curran began to suspect, from minute indications which would probably have escaped a less skilful observer, that his young visitor was actuated by some strong passions which it cost him a perpetual effort to conceal; and in consequence, without assigning to those appearances any precise motive or giving the subject much attention, he in general terms recommended to his family not to allow what was at present only a casual acquaintance to ripen into a greater degree of intimacy.

Upon the failure of the insurrection its leader escaped, and succeeded for some weeks in secreting himself. There is reason to believe that had he attended solely to his safety he could have easily effected his departure from the kingdom; but in the same spirit of romantic enthusiasm which distinguished his short career, he could not submit to leave a country to which he could never more return, without making an effort to have one final interview with the object of his unfortunate attachment, in order to receive her personal forgiveness for what he now considered as the deepest injury. It was apparently with a view to obtaining this last gratification that he selected the place of concealment in which he was discovered: he was arrested

in a house situate midway between Dublin and Mr. Curran's country-seat. Upon his person were found some papers which showed, that subsequent to the insurrection he had corresponded with one of that gentleman's family. A warrant accordingly followed, as a matter of course, to examine Mr. Curran's house, where some of Mr. Emmet's letters were found, which, together with the documents taken upon his person, placed beyond a doubt his connection with the late conspiracy, and were afterwards used as evidence upon his trial.

It was from this legal proceeding that Mr. Curran received the first intimation of the melancholy attachment in which one of his children had been involved. This is not the place to dwell upon the agony which such a discovery occasioned to the private feelings of the father. It was not the private calamity alone which he had to deplore—it came embittered by other circumstances which, for the moment, gave his sensibility an intenser shock.[1]

Mr. Curran[2] waited upon the attorney-general (the Right Hon. Standish O'Grady, the late Chief Baron of the Exchequer), and tendered his person and his papers, to abide any inquiry which the government might deem it expedient to direct. That officer entered into his situation with the most prompt and manly sympathy, and instead of assuming the character of an accuser of the father, more generously

[1] "Life of Curran," vol. ii. p. 148.

[2] Recent disclosures of the correspondence of Curran with the authorities at this time place him in a very unfavourable light. A full account will be found in "The Viceroy's Post Bag" by Michael MacDonagh.

displayed his zeal in interceding for his child. At his instance Mr. Curran accompanied him into the privy council. Upon his first entrance there were some indications of the hostile spirit which he had originally apprehended. A noble lord, who at the time held the highest judicial situation in Ireland, undertook to examine him upon the transaction which occasioned his attendance. To do this was undoubtedly his duty. He fixed his eye upon Mr. Curran and was proceeding to cross-examine his countenance, when (as is well remembered by the spectators of the scene) the swell of indignation and the glance of stern dignity and contempt which he encountered there gave his own nerves the shock which he had meditated for another's, and compelled him to shrink back into his chair, silent and disconcerted at the failure of his rash experiment. With this single exception, Mr. Curran was treated with the utmost delicacy.[1]

When it is remembered how obnoxious Curran had rendered himself to the government, by so many years' increasing opposition to every administration, with the exception of Lord Fitzwilliam's, while he was a member of it in the House of Commons; by the part he had taken in the various state trials from 1794 to the end of 1798; it cannot be wondered at, how vexatious to him must have been the event which left him at the mercy of that government, and rendered it necessary for him to appear before the privy council in the character, no longer of an intrepid

[1] "Life of Curran," vol. ii. p. 239.

advocate for others, but of a suspected person who had to enter into explanations of his own conduct. If there was aught in his treatment of his poor daughter of harshness and of undue severity, let the fault be remembered and dealt with uncharitably only by those who forget his services to his countrymen.

A recent discovery of mine, the result of researches in those precious monuments of villany the original correspondence of Major Sirr, with his employers as well as the spies and informers of 1798, places the major's character in a new light—that of an angel of mercy, administering comfort to the broken-hearted and the sorrowful.

Gentle reader, picture to yourself this angel of a town-major immediately after the capture of Robert Emmet, the attempted flight, and the striking down of the fugitive with the butt-end of a pistol, visiting the betrothed of the captured rebel in her own house, talking to her of comfort, and telling her of a catastrophe that set all consolation at defiance. Oh! for the pen-pencil of a word-painter like Macaulay to depict that scene, and to set before his readers another scene, connected with the former, which took place the evening of that day of the major's visitation at Curran's house.

The chief secretary of the lord lieutenant, Mr. Wickham, was dining with the lord chancellor, at his house in Ely-place, when a communication

reached him from Major Sirr, who was then at Mr. Curran's, after ransacking Miss Sarah Curran's apartment for letters of Robert Emmet, and discovering a large quantity of them. Of the major's letter to Mr. Wickham no copy is given in the collection of the Sirr papers, and no memorandum respecting it, but the answer to it is given, and the general nature of its contents may be inferred from the reply.

We must not imagine Mr. Wickham's noble host in Ely-place, and *vis-a-vis* on this occasion, was a man destitute of all generous feelings and kindly dispositions, when he was not plunged in political strife, and in actual conflict with his opponents. We may imagine the chancellor and the chief secretary were enjoying themselves on this particular occasion, when the major's communication was handed to Mr. Wickham, and we may be tolerably sure, instantly it was read, presented to Lord Clare. It would be unnecessary to speculate on the observations it called forth. We may comprehend the nature of them from the following note of Mr. Wickham, in the handwriting of which there is evidence of the anger, impatience, and disgust of the English gentleman.

TO MAJOR SIRR.

At the Lord Chancellor's, Friday.

Dear Sir—I lament exceedingly the circumstance of Mr. Curran's absence from his country-house on

your arrival, and am much distressed at hearing the state of Miss Sarah Curran's mind, as described in your letter; in every case I think you had better come away, and leave Miss Sarah Curran to the care of her sisters.

I am, dear Sir, &c., &c.,

W. WICKHAM.

Fancy, gentle reader, Mr. Secretary Wickham, an English gentleman of kindly feelings, of polished manners and honourable principles—after the loathsome business of his office is over for the day, and he has done for a few hours with the cabals, intrigues, jobs, and manœuvres of the multifarious faction that affects exclusive loyalty, and expects exclusive patronage at the hands of the administration—sitting *tête-á-tête* with Lord Clare, sipping his claret, and enjoying the chancellor's curious way of being funny and facetious. "Black Jack" was certainly no joker in the ordinary way of jocularity; but he loved to make sport for the Philistines in power, by ridiculing the manners, peculiarities, propensities, and vices even of the partizans of the Orange faction, of which he, John Fitzgibbon, was the head, and wholly and solely was so on the principle of its being better to reign in office than serve in opposition.

But let us contemplate the actors in that previous scene I have referred to.

What a strange spectacle, and a mournful one

at the same time, was this, for an observer of human nature, and of the realities of that kind of experience of life that is stranger than fiction! To see the bluff, stalworth, vulgar-looking police official in great authority—a man of brute force, of brute courage, of brutal mind and brutal instincts, of feelings and pursuits congenial to them that gave a fierce air and a formidable character to his whole appearance—bending over the form of the poor, heart-sick girl, shrinking from the truculent gaze and the profanation of the touch of such a man! Can we fancy, without a shudder, the friend and accomplice of Sandys and O'Brien throughout the reign of terror, bending over that forlorn young creature—the man whose hands were imbued with the blood of Lord Edward Fitzgerald—who had drawn so very lately the blood, too, of Robert Emmet—who had dogged and set him, and made a prisoner of him, but not before he had thrust the butt-end of his pistol into the face of the young man whose faith was plighted to that girl.

Let us imagine the feelings of one in such circumstances as hers, compelled to endure not only the horror of his presence, but the revolting proffer of his care and the protestations of his sympathy. Have we no painter to catch the expression of those looks of his, the insolence and vulgarity of his mien and manner, the feigned

solicitude of this compassionate town-major, with all the vigilance of a police officer mingled in his regard, affecting to be humane, and manifesting a deep interest in the sorrows of the young lady vehemently suspected of loving, "not wisely, but too well," a youthful rebel? Rembrandt alone could do justice to such a scene and such a subject. He indeed might depict the terrorist of Dublin performing the part of a comforter in a lady's chamber that he has been ransacking for evidence of her lover's guilt, ever and anon dropping a word about resignation and religion while he is rifling her boudoir, turning over her private papers, gathering up the fragments of her torn love-letters, and cramming into his pockets every scrap of paper that bears the name or had the semblance of the handwriting of that lover.

The artist who painted Judas in his despair, could have equally well depicted him in his noonday perfidy, and pourtrayed all the blandness and benignity, from the lip outward, of his accosting smile. He indeed could paint Sirr to the life, and set him before the world in the true light of his character on this occasion, giving due expression to every change of countenance indicative of insidiousness and craft. He alone could put the man before us, with a sense of power in his look without any legal limit to its use, seeking to subdue the fierceness of its aspect,

and succeeding only to the extent of assuming the sly, demure, lying-in-wait quiescence of features in a state of unnatural repose. In the portraiture of that expression, with all its blandness, one would read the words that Sirr had often addressed to his fellow-citizens, "Who dares to dispute my authority?"

The interval between 1798 and 1803 was not too great, even for the remembrance of one so young as Sarah Curran, to recall the time when, in "the tabernacle of robbers," there were men who had been transformed into agents of police, directors and supervisors of spies, informers, and stipendiary swearers, who had not yet lost all their power and *prestige* in the state. Sirr, it is true, had been not entirely shorn of his beams in 1803. He was still a luminary, indeed, in the upper regions of the police—though beginning to shine in that firmament with mitigated rays. He was "meditating at that time on a new phase" in his public life. He was about to become a saint, and in this new character, even under a milder administration of government, he was enabled to maintain his influence as a man of supernatural knowledge of "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," "who discovereth things out of darkness, and bringeth up to light the shadows of death."

Such was the man who ministered to Sarah Curran, when the fatal news was communicated

to her that Robert Emmet had been arrested, which was equivalent to an intimation that his doom was sealed. For Sirr's victim there was but a brief interval between capture and execution, and in that interval, behold Eliphaz the Temanite standing by the side of the most sorrowful of the daughters of men, coolly and calmly, like one of the congregation of the hypocrites, talking to the afflicted one of comfort and consolation.

One feels as if he were present at this scene, marking how composedly this officer of justice, taking on him the office of a minister of peace, reasons with her anguish; how complacently he wags his head when he reproves the impatience of her sorrow. One almost imagines he hears the heart-stricken maiden utter words that tremble on her lips, in mournful concord with the tears that trickle down her pale face: "God hath shut me up with the unjust man, and delivered me into the hands of the wicked." "How long do you afflict my soul, and break me in pieces with words." "I have done with hope, I shall now live no longer: spare me, for my days are nothing."

In the papers and correspondence of Major Sirr, deposited in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, no portion of the letters of Sarah Curran to Robert Emmet, which fell into the hands of Major Sirr, are to be found. They were de-

stroyed, we are told by the late Mr. Charles Phillips, in his "Recollections of the Right Honourable John Philpot Curran and his Co-temporaries," from laudable motives of delicacy and compassionate feelings, by the major. Marvellous influence of tenderness and pity, to be exerted on the feelings and exhibited in the conduct of a man not given to the melting mood! But we find in those papers the short note that speaks volumes, from the chief secretary, Mr. Wickham, addressed to the major, which I have just referred to, and made the subject of a few passing comments. And the next paper in the Sirr collection is a memorandum occupying half a sheet of letter paper, signed "J.D.S.," that renders the delicacy of feeling which is said to have prompted the destruction of those letters utterly unavailing, leaving, as it does, a record in those papers, now deposited in a public institution, calculated to brand with infamy the name, and to leave the memory abhorred of a young lady, whose sorrows and unhappy fate alone should have been a safeguard and a shield from every ungenerous thought, unjust suspicion, and unworthy imputation.

Here is the memorandum signed "J. D. S." in the Sirr papers, referring to the seizure of Robert Emmet's letters addressed to and in the possession of Miss Sarah Curran, made by Major Sirr; and also to those letters of Miss Curran

discovered by the same functionary at the place of abode of Robert Emmet at the time of his arrest. Let this document be read slowly and calmly, be carefully considered, and duly appreciated. Referring to one letter of Robert Emmet, which was torn into fragments immediately upon Major Sirr's visit, the writer says:

> They were preserved, and with great labour reunited. The atrocious sentiments it expressed were all but diabolical. Never were such tendencies shown to any one as to this unfortunate, misguided lady. I saw the correspondence between her and Emmet, tied up and sealed in six or seven immense piles, occupying a space of about a yard square. They were afterwards deliberately consumed out of compassion to the family. Never was there such a correspondence between lovers—projects of domestic peace were all subordinated to those of public [a word here is illegible] and wrong.
>
> In one letter, the poor maniacal woman gloated with satisfaction at the prospect of seeing her father hung from a tree in his own orchard.
>
> (Signed) J. D. S.
>
> [No date.]

The writer of this memorandum was evidently not of the scholastic order,

> Who hold no sin so deeply red
> As that of breaking Priscian's head.

He gave himself little trouble about Lindley Murray. He had either no belief in, nor respect for the alleged compassionate motives which

actuated Major Sirr in destroying those letters, for he frustrated the benevolent intentions of the major by leaving on record a description of those letters which it would be impossible for the original letters to leave a worse impression of. I take it for granted then that the writer of this memorandum has utterly mistaken the nature of those letters. And when I consider how all notions of propriety—all sense of what is due to misfortune utterly defenceless—of respect for the graves of the young, especially of those who have been signally unfortunate, were disregarded by the writer above referred to, if what he states were true—and how charity and humanity could not fail to be outraged were those terrible allegations false, those imputations of diabolical, atrocious, murderous, and even parricidal sentiments, said to be expressed in those letters, I come to the conclusion that this statement ought not to be believed nor to have been made. There is no evidence of the existence of any such sentiments as have been referred to, for all the letters in which these sentiments were said to exist have been destroyed. In the absence of such evidence the terrible imputations on the character of Robert Emmet and Sarah Curran ought never to have been made. But whoever the writer of this memorandum was—whether some associate rebel-hunter and ransacker of private letters of "suspected" lovers—some underling of the major's

battalion—some adjutant of his in the police on special state duty, who accompanied Sirr to Mr. Curran's house, and assisted in the search there, or at Emmet's place of refuge at Harold's-cross —whether his name was John Doe Shaw, or James Daniel Scott, or Joseph David Surface, who had some of the seized papers in his possession, and appended this memorandum to them—sufficient has been said to enable my readers to form an estimate of the value to be set on his evidence, either in vindication or condemnation of it. With the following observations I dismiss this loathsome topic. The necessity of making them has been forced on me by a strong conviction that the allegations respecting the correspondence of Sarah Curran and Robert Emmet are wholly at variance with the modes of thought and expression of both.

No small consolation is it to find the same individual that impugned the character of Sarah Curran, in the same book of terrible records of Major Sirr's iniquitous correspondence, standing forth in the face of the world, and proclaiming the honesty, bravery, and innocence of Jemmy O'Brien. J. D. S. again makes his appearance in this correspondence in behalf of Sirr's friend—the convicted, executed murderer, James O'Brien.

JEMMY O'BRIEN.

A memorial of O'Brien to the lord lieutenant, dated July, 1800, praying remission of the sentence of death passed on him for the murder of John Hoey. A letter of Lord Castlereagh to Major Sirr, stating he had referred the memorial to Judge Day and Baron Yelverton. Unfavourable report of judges. The following words are endorsed on the memorial: "O'Brien was distinctly a murdered man. His own statement was the truth. He was a calumniated, honest, and brave man.—J. D. S." [1]

I might rest the conclusion I have come to as to the statements of J. D. S. on the character of Sarah Curran—on the character of Robert Emmet, and the passion that was the ruling one of his life for Sarah Curran.

A man of Emmet's character, who loved the name of honour more than he feared death, and in his sentiments with respect to the destiny and the noble qualities of women, was true and loyal in his chivalry, as ever knight of old; whose purity of life and morals, inflexibility of principles and purpose, have never been denied; whose mind, moreover, was highly cultivated—stored not only with the ancient glories of Grecian and Roman erudition, but with the lighter graces of modern literature—was not likely to fix his affections lightly, or on one unworthy of them;

[1] The papers and correspondence of Major Sirr, in the library of T. C. D.

and where once fixed his passion was not destined to consume itself, whether in exile, in a distant land, or in a dungeon, while it had the recollection of the love of such a being as Sarah Curran to subsist on. The sentiments and conduct of Robert Emmet were in perfect conformity with opinions expressed by him, long previously to that attachment, with respect to the claims of woman to man's highest respect—to a sort of reverential deference, for qualities which he considered preserved more traces of their original purity and excellence than were manifested in those of the other sex. I speak of his opinions on this subject, and their influence on his actions, from the most authentic information, and especially from the statements of one gentleman, intimately and closely connected with him from the days of his boyhood to the day of his death.[1]

A few hours after Emmet's conviction he wrote to Mr. Curran the following letter:

FROM ROBERT EMMET TO JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN, ESQ.

I did not expect you to be my counsel. I nominated you, because not to have done so might have appeared

[1] The person above referred to is Mr. John Patten, amongst whose papers I have reason to believe, were they forthcoming, ample evidence would be found in corroboration of the conclusion I have come to with respect to Robert Emmet's opinions. In the Sirr papers above cited there is a note of Mr. Secretary Marsden to Major Sirr, dated "Friday evening," in these words: "Mr. Wickham wishes that Patten's papers should be got. Yours very truly, A. Marsden."

remarkable. Had Mr. —— been in town, I did not even wish to have seen you, but as he was not, I wrote to you to come to me at once. I know that I have done you very severe injury, much greater than I can atone for with my life; that atonement I did offer to make before the privy council, by pleading guilty if those documents were suppressed. I offered more—I offered, if I was permitted to consult some persons, and if they would consent to an accommodation for saving the lives of others, that I would only require for my part of it the suppression of those documents, and that I would abide the event of my own trial. This was also rejected, and nothing but individual information (with the exception of names) would be taken. My intention was, not to leave the suppression of those documents to possibility, but to render it unnecessary for any one to plead for me, by pleading guilty to the charge myself.

The circumstances that I am now going to mention I do not state in my own justification. When I first addressed your daughter I expected that in another week my own fate would be decided. I knew that in case of success many others might look on me differently from what they did at that moment, but I speak with sincerity when I say that I never was anxious for situation or distinction myself, and I did not wish to be united to one who was. I spoke to your daughter, neither expecting, nor in fact, under those circumstances, wishing that there should be a return of attachment, but wishing to judge of her dispositions—to know how far they might be not unfavourable or disengaged, and to know what foundation I might

afterwards have to count on. I received no encouragement whatever. She told me she had no attachment for any person, nor did she seem likely to have any that could make her wish to quit you. I staid away till the time had elapsed, when I found that the event to which I allude was to be postponed indefinitely. I returned by a kind of infatuation, thinking that to myself only was I giving pleasure or pain. I perceived no progress of attachment on her part, nor anything in her conduct to distinguish me from a common acquaintance. Afterwards I had reason to suppose that discoveries were made, and that I should be obliged to quit the kingdom immediately, and I came to make a renunciation of any approach to friendship that might have been formed. On that very day, she herself spoke to me to discontinue my visits. I told her that it was my intention, and I mentioned the reason. I then for the first time found, when I was unfortunate, by the manner in which she was affected, that there was a return of affection, and that it was too late to retreat. My own apprehensions, also, I afterwards found, were without cause, and I remained. There has been much culpability on my part in all this, but there has also been a great deal of that misfortune which seems uniformly to have accompanied me. That I have written to your daughter since an unfortunate event has taken place was an additional breach of propriety, for which I have suffered well; but I will candidly confess that I not only do not feel it to have been of the same extent, but that I consider it to have been unavoidable after what had passed; for though I will not attempt to justify in the smallest

degree my former conduct, yet, when an attachment was once formed between us—and a sincerer one never did exist—I feel that, peculiarly circumstanced as I then was, to have left her uncertain of my situation would neither have weaned her affections nor lessened her anxiety; and looking upon her as one whom, if I had lived, I hoped to have had my partner for life, I did hold the removing her anxiety above every other consideration. I would rather have had the affections of your daughter in the back settlements of America, than the first situation this country could afford without them. I know not whether this will be any extenuation of my offence; I know not whether it will be any extenuation of it to know that if I had that situation in my power at this moment, I would relinquish it to devote my life to her happiness; I know not whether success would have blotted out the recollection of what I have done; but I know that a man with the coldness of death on him need not be made to feel any other coldness, and that he may be spared any addition to the misery he feels, not for himself, but for those to whom he has left nothing but sorrow.[1]

On the morning of the day of Emmet's execution, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Richard Curran:

FROM ROBERT EMMET TO RICHARD CURRAN, ESQ.

My dearest Richard—I find I have but a few hours to live, but if it was the last moment, and that the

[1] "The original is not signed or dated—it was written in the interval between Emmet's conviction and execution."—*Curran's Life*, vol. ii. p. 236.

power of utterance was leaving me, I would thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generous expressions of affection and forgiveness to me. If there was any one in the world in whose breast my death might be supposed not to stifle every spark of resentment, it might be you. I have deeply injured you—I have injured the happiness of a sister that you love, and who was formed to give happiness to every one about her, instead of having her own mind a prey to affliction. O Richard! I have no excuse to offer, but that I meant the reverse; I intended as much happiness for Sarah as the most ardent love could have given her. I never did tell you how much I idolized her. It was not with a wild or unfounded passion, but it was an attachment increasing every hour, from an admiration of the purity of her mind and respect for her talents. I did dwell in secret upon the prospect of our union. I did hope that success, while it afforded the opportunity of our union, might be a means of confirming an attachment which misfortune had called forth. I did not look to honours for myself—praise I would have asked from the lips of no man; but I would have wished to read in the glow of Sarah's countenance that her husband was respected.

My love, Sarah! it was not thus that I thought to have requited your affection. I did hope to be a prop, round which your affections might have clung, and which would never have been shaken; but a rude blast has snapped it, and they have fallen over a grave.

This is no time for affliction. I have had public motives to sustain my mind, and I have not suffered it

to sink; but there have been moments in my imprisonment, when my mind was sunk by grief on her account, that death would have been a refuge. God bless you, my dearest Richard. I am obliged to leave off immediately.[1]

ROBERT EMMET.

A day or two after the execution (Leonard, the old gardener of Dr. Emmet, told me), Miss Curran contrived to elude the vigilance of her friends, and in the dusk of the evening visited the grave of her lover.

I am indebted to a friend of nearly forty years' acquaintance, the late Thomas Lyons, Esq., of Cork, for the following particulars (in which, however, some slight errors are to be found) respecting Sarah Curran's residence in Cork, previously to her marriage. To the same valued friend, one of the best men, the best of Irishmen, I owe likewise a great deal of the information which enabled me to complete the memoirs of the Sheares, and of General Corbett, natives of Cork.

It will be observed that a circumstance of mournful interest, described by Washington Irving as having taken place in Dublin, occurred, according to Mr. Lyons's account, at the house of Mr. Thomas Penrose of Cork.

Of Miss Curran's sad story little is known here. Her brother, who has written his father's life, is silent

[1] *Curran's Life* by his Son, vol. ii. p. 238.

on the subject, owing probably to the severity with which she was treated on account of her attachment to Emmet.

The following are the only particulars I could learn:

She was the third daughter of J. P. Curran, and remarkable for her beauty and accomplishments. She was about eighteen years old when Emmet first visited her at her father's, and a warm attachment soon sprung up between them, but was concealed until Emmet's fatal arrest and speedy execution. Previous to his trial, Robert Emmet wrote to Curran a full expression of his passion, and it was well-known that Emmet's frequent visits placed Curran under strong suspicion with government, so as to cause his being examined before the council. This discovery, it is said, led to the extremity of Miss Curran's expulsion from her paternal home; at all events, of her being obliged to seek the refuge and protection of a friend's house. She was received into the family of Mr. Penrose, of Woodhill, on the Glanmire road, near to Cork. It was at a party given by Mr. Penrose that a circumstance took place which has been the subject of song and story. In a moment of unconsciousness, she quitted the gay circle, and seating herself at the foot of the stair-case, began, evidently unaware of what was passing around her, to sing a plaintive melody, that had reference to her own unhappy circumstances; she had an exquisite voice, and the sad tone in which she sang soon drew around her a crowd of sympathizing listeners. One, a colonel in the British army, offered her his hand. Homeless, deprived of the protection of her father, and thrown entirely on her friends for

support, she had no alternative but to accept this offer, but told him she had no heart to give away.

He knew her position, and respected all that was sacred in it: the marriage took place in Cork. His regiment was ordered to Malta some time after; her health becoming every day worse, she proceeded to Italy, and two years after her marriage she died of a broken heart. Her remains were brought to Ireland, in fulfilment of a promise made her grandmother, that she should be buried with her; and her remains are buried in the churchyard of Newmarket, in this county, without monument or inscription. A tombstone was prepared for this grave; but owing to the expense not being defrayed, or from some other cause, it lay in Mallow up to the last three or four years,[1] but lately, when sought for with the view of having it erected, it was not forthcoming, and the remains of Sarah Curran, the object of the affections of Robert Emmet, lie in an unknown and neglected grave.

But in a later communication of Mr. Lyons he informed me that he had received, from a person intimately acquainted with the Penrose family, some intelligence more authentic than had been given me in a former account of the scene in which Miss Curran appeared, and of which Washington Irving has treated.

Mr. Lyons says:

[1] I have made inquiries at Mallow, and likewise at Newberry (for the same rumour extended to that locality), respecting the tombstone said to have been sent to both places some years ago, and with the same result—no person inquired of, had ever seen or heard of that stone.—R. R. M.

She always reproached herself with being in some degree the chief cause of poor Emmet's disgraceful death, by not going with him to America when he could so easily have effected his escape. One circumstance connected with her sojourn here I recollect well: there was a fancy or masked-ball in Cork, for some public and popular charity, whilst she was on a visit at Woodhill, to which she went with a party in the costume of a group of gipsy ballad-singers and fortune-tellers. She sang (and thus levied large contributions for the charity) some of the most beautiful, plaintive Irish airs of Owenson; and it was soon known that the singer was the daughter of Curran. The poor masked gipsy girl was the attraction of the throng; but she soon left the ball. There is a sketch of all the circumstances connected with the last days of Mrs. Sturgeon in "The Literary Souvenir" of 1831, by Alaric A. Watts.

The late Dr. Bullen of Cork, in a letter to T. Lyons, Esq., subsequent to the publication of a former series of this work, makes the following reference to Colonel Sturgeon:

Previous to the marriage of Miss Curran and Captain Sturgeon, he met his future father-in-law, John P. Curran, at dinner at my father's, in Cork, when the old man expressed himself in terms of high admiration of the young officer, who was then a total stranger to him. I believe that they never met after. Miss Curran first met Sturgeon at a fancy ball in the theatre at Cork, and not at the Rotundo. Sturgeon was a most accomplished soldier, and had been educated at

the military school of Brienne, also the scene of the military education of Napoleon and Wellington. He belonged to a corps of engineer officers established, under the name of "The Staff Corps," by the Duke of York, who was jealous that the engineers should be, like the artillery, under the Board of Ordnance. The Duke of Wellington entertained a very high opinion of Colonel Sturgeon; in his letter to the Earl of Liverpool, dated Badajos, 19th December, 1809, speaking of the want of an officer to send on a military mission into Spain, he says, "Sturgeon, who is a clever fellow, and I should think qualified for such a mission, cannot well be spared from the army." He is again noticed by him in his despatch to Colonel Murray (afterwards Sir George), dated Coimbra, 9th January, 1809. He is spoken of in a very marked manner, on the occasion alluded to by Dr. Madden, for his conduct at the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the duke's despatch, dated 20th of January, 1812, and again in the despatch to General Hill, dated 5th October, 1812. The highest encomium is, however, passed on him as Lientenant-Colonel Sturgeon in the official despatch of the great battle of Salamanca, dated 24th of July, 1812. The duke was not a man to flatter; and it is said by military men, that, after the advance of the British into France, Colonel Sturgeon felt slighted, and threw away his life; having unnecessarily exposed himself in an affair of posts, in some vineyards in the south of France; one of the last occurrences of the war, March, 1814.

The marriage of Sarah Curran with Captain Sturgeon is thus recorded in "The Chronicle" of

"The Gentleman's Magazine" for December, 1805, p. 1170.

24th (November, 1805), at Cork, Robert Henry Sturgeon, Esq., captain in his Majesty's Staff Corps, and nephew to the late Marquess of Rockingham, to Sarah, youngest daughter of J. P. Curran, Esq., barrister-at-law.[1]

It may be presumed the data above-mentioned were furnished to the press by Captain Sturgeon. It may be considered the relationship with the late Marquess of Rockingham was not claimed without authority. I have heard it denied, however, without any grounds for the denial.

The fact, however, is indisputable that Captain Robert Henry Sturgeon was the son of a sister of the marquess, married to a person of the name of Sturgeon. The relationship will be found declared in the will of the Marquess of Rockingham, who died without issue, the 1st of July, 1782, little more than three months after the formation of the ministry of which he was the chief (27th of April preceding).

In "The Gentleman's Magazine" for July, 1782, p. 358, a notice of the death of the Marquess of Rockingham will be found, and the following references to certain particulars of his will:

[1] The marriage is recorded in "The Annual Register" for 1805, p. 449.

He bequeathed to his lady the sum of £5,000 per annum over and above her jointure, on condition that she never marries; if she should marry she is then to enjoy the £4,000 per annum as settled on her at her marriage; to his nephew Sturgeon, the son of his sister, who is settled in Ireland, £300 a-year; to his nephew the Hon. Captain Fitzwilliam, the sum of £1,000, dying without issue. The residue of his estate, computed at £40,000 a-year, subject to legacies and mortgages, devolves to the Right Hon. Earl Fitzwilliam, his nephew, who likewise has no child.

In a London periodical the following account of Colonel Sturgeon's parentage appeared nearly thirty years ago:

SINGULAR MESALLIANCE.

The following historiette will be found to possess special interest to those who have read Irving's "Broken Heart," and remember the heroine of those beautiful lines of Moore, "She is far from the Land," &c.:

William Sturgeon was a young man of unexceptionable character and of handsome personal exterior, but of the humblest origin, and totally destitute of the commonest rudiments of education. His parents resided in the county of Wicklow, on the property, we conjecture, of the Marquis of Rockingham, now possessed by his collateral descendants, the Earls Fitzwilliam. This is a surmise, but, admitting its truth, the fact will be readily accounted for of the youth in question having been sent to London, and engaged as

servant in the family of Lord Rockingham—Charles, the second marquis, whose memory Burke has so ably panegyrised, and whose upright and patriotic conduct as a statesman was fully equalled by his virtues in private life.

Here was William appointed a personal footman to the Lady Harriet Wentworth, youngest sister of the marquis, over whose large and splendid establishment she at this period (1764) presided as mistress. The lady was just twenty-six; plain in person, but clever and amiable.

The growing interest which, after a short time, she began to evince for her new and handsome attendant was of course set down to motives purely benevolent, and therefore praiseworthy. She had him taught to read and write, and was herself at pains with his education. That a warmer feeling influenced her conduct no one ever dreamed; or that a woman of superior rank and intellect, in daily association with the highly-born and highly-favoured of the land, the sister of one of the most celebrated statesmen of the day, and with every opportunity afforded her of forming a suitable connection, could possibly contemplate so extraordinary a mesalliance as that of a union with her own footman!

Such, however, proved to be the case; and for nine days this singular affair was the talk and wonder of the fashionable world of London. In the midst of her infatuation, this lady evinced a degree of calculating prudence and discretion doubtless commendable, but certainly not a little surprising, for she entailed her fortune with the utmost circumspection. An annuity

of one hundred pounds was settled on the young man, and this sum was cautiously mentioned in anticipation of a mutual separation. On her children, if there should be any, she entailed the whole of her fortune; while, in the event of her marriage being unfruitful, it was to revert to her own family. This deed the lady put out of her own power by placing it in the keeping of the celebrated Lord Mansfield—her uncle by marriage—whom at the same time she nominated trustee. It was drawn up by her own hand; and, as his lordship—a good judge in such matters—remarked, as binding as any lawyer could make it.

Just previous to Lady Harriet becoming the wife of Sturgeon, a suspicion was excited for the first time among his fellow-servants. Some trifling act of familiarity towards the lady, pardonable from one of her own rank, but impertinent and altogether absurd in a domestic, chanced to be detected, and being duly reported to the housekeeper of Lord Rockingham, that person considered herself as fully justified in seeking amongst the young man's property for confirmation of their suspicions. This was soon afforded in the shape of a letter which William had commenced writing to his parents in Ireland. It dwelt on the kindness of his lady, their intended union, and the hope that this event, so great for him, might afford the means of benefiting his father and mother.

As may be conjectured, an express was at once sent off to Lord Rockingham, who at the time was visiting his estate in Yorkshire; but fortunately, or unfortunately, we hardly know which, it arrived too late. Before the marquess had reached London, the

marriage had taken place. On pretence of going to view a collection of paintings which she wished to inspect before the hour for admitting strangers to the exhibition, Lady Harriet had left home unusually early; her liveried menial, as usual, in attendance. They had nearly reached the church when the young man discovered that in his agitation he had forgotten the ring. He hurried home to procure it, and there being questioned as to his speedy return, he evaded the inquiry by remarking that his lady had neglected to bring the catalogue of the pictures.

After the ceremony, the newly-married couple went to Ireland, Lady Harriet wisely dropping her title for that of Mrs. Sturgeon, by which humbler name she was ever afterwards known. William, who seems to have been a dutiful and exemplary son, often went to visit his parents, and was enabled, through his own comparative abundance, to administer in many ways to their comfort. Still he was very reluctant to introduce them to his high-born bride, fearing to shock her with the poverty of the parental roof and the homely ignorance of those who had given him birth. She however was not to be deterred; so, finding the unwillingness of her husband continue, the lady, availing herself of a temporary absence on his part, drove to the humble dwelling of the parents; who, it may well be supposed, were enraptured at the visit, and thought they could not do enough for her who had made the fortune of their son.

Our story goes on to say that William Sturgeon, arriving unexpectedly, was most agreeably surprised, as well as gratified, by the scene which awaited him.

It was indeed creditable to all parties, but especially so to the high-born wife, who, however improperly she may have acted in the first instance in descending from her proper sphere, evinced a right feeling, seldom met with, in not appearing ashamed of those with whom she had voluntarily chosen to connect herself.

But, however kindly disposed towards the humble and grateful relatives of her husband, it may easily be imagined that Ireland was no agreeable residence for the sister of Lord Rockingham, who was then in the zenith of power and prosperity, and whose name was well known throughout the empire. A residence abroad was therefore wisely determined upon, and thither the pair proceeded. In one of the continental towns Mrs. Sturgeon and her husband lived in quiet privacy for many years. The conduct of the latter was perfectly unexceptionable; while that of his lady having eventually gained for her the forgiveness of the noble family to which she was allied, her son by Sturgeon was educated and brought forward by them.

Of the father there is little more to relate. Having survived his wife, he returned to his native land, and once more resumed the humble occupation of the farm and unambitious pursuits of lowly rural life. Within the last twenty-five years he was yet living; having been seen by a friend of the writer. He was then a hale, venerable old man, of stately presence, and with the remains of much personal beauty. Of the curious particulars of his younger days few were aware. He seldom alluded to them.

Of the son of this singularly matched couple it may not be uninteresting to say a few words ere we con-

clude our article. This youth possessed mental and personal advantages of no common order, while, as before stated, the noble relatives of his mother afforded him a good education. He was early destined for the army; and some years after, while quartered in the south of Ireland, was thrown into the society of a young lady, at that time the object of much interest and sympathy among the immediate circle of her personal friends and admirers. This was the daughter of the celebrated Irish barrister, John Philpot Curran; a lady whom the poet Moore, in the spirit of ardent patriotism, has immortalised in his beautiful lines beginning, "She is far from the Land." We find her also the heroine of that affecting-told tale, "The Broken Heart," in the "Sketch Book" of Washington Irving, whose poetic imagination invests her with charms, personal and mental, to which Miss Curran had no pretensions.

When first met by Major Sturgeon, she was still the victim of an all-absorbing passion for the brave but ill-fated Robert Emmet; whose misguided enthusiasm in the cause of his country had recently brought him to an ignominious death. In hopeless anguish she yet clung to the memory of him for whose sake filial ties had been broken, and she herself had become an outcast from the paternal roof; supported only by the charity of friends.

Her sad history interested and gained for her the affections, of Major Sturgeon; who, much against the wishes of his relations persisted in a spirit of romantic ardour in his suit, though for a considerable time without success. A sense of gratitude, however, aided by

the conviction of her painfully dependent state, induced Miss Curran, after awhile, to relent. She married, giving to her lover at the same time the not very satisfactory assurance that her affections could never be his. As a wife, we have reason to believe her conduct was irreproachable—but she did not long survive the union; while her gallant husband, who had he lived would probably have risen to the summit of his profession, was doomed to perish in the service of his country, having been shortly after killed in one of our Peninsular wars. [1]

Immediately after her marriage she accompanied her husband to Sicily, subsequently to Portugal, returned to England; and there, in the prime of life, the amiable, the gentle Sarah Curran closed her sad career in the course of a few weeks after her arrival. Her remains were conveyed to Ireland, and buried at Newmarket, the burial-place of her father's family. Whether their interment there was by her own desire, or in the fulfilment of her supposed wishes on the part of Captain Sturgeon, I am unable to state. In either case, the removal to her own land was an act which cannot fail to be a matter of mournful gratification to her countrymen.

To the reader who thinks too much has been said on this subject I have no apology to offer,

[1] From the preceding notice of Mrs. Sturgeon's decease, and that likewise of Mr. Lyons, and also of Dr. Bullen, it would appear that her death took place on the Continent. Such, however, is not the fact.

not even for these last tributary lines to the memory of Sarah Curran:

Her sorrows are numbered—no longer she weeps—
  Every pang she endured is requited;
With endless delight and in silence she sleeps,
  For in death with her love she's united.

Like SIDNEY he died, but his memory shall live
  In the bosoms of those who deplored him,
And Pity her purest of dew-drops shall give
  To the sorrows of those who adored him.

For he loved—was beloved; but, alas! in his bloom
  The ordeal of fate sore tried him;
And his spirit took flight from the world of gloom
  To that glory which here was denied him.

From regions of bliss—the high heaven above—
  Where sorrows can never invade him,
He saw her distress, and he beckon'd his love
  To ascend, and with joy she obeyed him.

And she who is joined to the spirit she mourned,
  Now in bliss, 'tis in vain to deplore her;
For her mem'ry shall live in their bosoms inurned
  Who vowed e'en in death to adore her.

Whether hero, or lover, or else, matters not—
  "Other times—other men shall divine him;"
Let him rest with his love, by the world forgot—
  We have hearts large enough to enshrine him.

Poor Miss Curran, after the death of her lover, did not very long remain in her father's house. Her wretchedness found no alleviation there; and the very constraint imposed on her feelings was productive of additional misery. At length she quitted her father's house, "her home no more,"

and proceeded to Cork, accompanied by her sister. There she was received into the family of Mr. Penrose, a quaker—a gentleman, I believe, who was intimately acquainted with some of the leaders in the affairs of 1798. She was treated by the family of Mr. Penrose with the utmost kindness and most delicate attention. It was while she was on a visit with Mr. Penrose she became acquainted with Captain Sturgeon; and after some months this poor girl, friendless, homeless, dependent on the kindness of people almost strangers to her, endured the attentions of a person singularly refined, delicate, and amiable in his disposition, moved less by her personal attractions than the sufferings of one so young, so good, so gentle, and yet so friendless and forlorn; that gentleman made an offer to her of his hand and fortune.

Sarah Curran was then beginning to manifest symptoms of decline. The sorrows that in silence and in the solitude of society (for such it was to her) had preyed upon her health, her appearance now betrayed in the unerring symptoms of that insidious disease, which mocks the hopes of its victims, and of those around them, and not unfrequently mimics the hue of health and the lustre of the bright eye of youth and loveliness.

Captain Sturgeon's proposal embraced the project of a residence in a southern climate. Any project that afforded an opportunity of

leaving Ireland had a recommendation. Sarah Curran finally consented to become the wife of Captain Sturgeon. Robert Emmet's memory was not forgotten; its claim on her heart was recognised and acknowledged by the friend and protector who had assumed a husband's title, and proved the generosity and benevolence of his nature, by his care and protection of one who was worthy of so much pity as well as admiration.

In "The Literary Souvenir" of 1831, there is an article signed M——, entitled "Some Passages in the History of Sarah Curran," evidently written by a lady, and by one well acquainted with her. The writer, who I have reason to believe was a member of the family of Mr. Crawford, says:

When I first saw Sarah Curran she was in her twelfth year, and was even then remarkable for a pensive character of countenance, which she never afterwards lost. A favourite sister, to the best of my recollection a twin, died when she was eight years old [she was between twelve and thirteen], and was buried under a large tree on the lawn of The Priory (Mr. Curran's seat, near Dublin), directly opposite to the window of their nursery. Under its shade they had often sat together, pulled the first primroses at its root, and watched in its leaves the earliest verdure of the spring. Many an hour, for many a year, did the sorrowful survivor take her silent stand at the melancholy window, gazing on the well-known spot,

which constituted all her little world of joys and sorrows. To this circumstance she attributed the tendency to melancholy which formed so marked a feature of her character through life. . . . . .

There was another circumstance to which that tendency might have been attributed: at the age of fourteen she lost a mother's care—she lost a mother whom "she was fondly attached to; and, worse than death, had to do with that separation on that most melancholy occasion." The Rev. Thomas Crawford of Lismore, an early college friend of Curran, offered an asylum in his house to the poor girl (the youngest and favourite daughter of her mother), who was overwhelmed with grief at this mournful event. The offer was accepted; and under the kind protecting care of this good man Sarah Curran remained, till better thoughts at home led to her return to it. "But there," says the writer of the notice abovementioned, "my poor friend's life was but an April day; or rather it consisted of drops of joy with draughts of ill between." [1]

[1] The account of Miss Curran having gone directly from her father's house to that of Mr. Penrose, of Cork, is erroneous. Mr. Crawford was the kind friend who took on him the duties of a father, when these were abandoned in the case of poor Sarah Curran. The friendship that subsisted between her and all the members of this amiable family was only interrupted by her death. She constantly corresponded while she was in Cork, and after her marriage when on the Continent, with the Miss Crawfords, and I am much mistaken if the writer of this admirable notice in "The Literary Souvenir" be not a member of the Crawford family. The

It is stated by the writer of this notice that Robert Emmet was first introduced to Sarah Curran by her brother, a fellow-student at college of the former; that Robert, soon after this acquaintance was made, had become a frequent visitor at The Priory, and this intimacy had terminated in an attachment as ardent as it was unfortunate, between him and the youngest daughter of Curran.

The writer states that, amongst Emmet's papers, several of Sarah Curran's letters were found, one strongly dissuading him from his fatal project, and another after the unfortunate issue of its attempted execution, pleading her love and duty to her father in reply to his solicitations to her to accompany him to America. This was at the period he was concealed in Dublin, and when measures were taking to secure a passage for him to the United States on board an American vessel. "The last time," continues the writer, "I saw my friend, she seemed happy; she believed him to be 'far away on the billow,' beyond the power of his enemies, and destined to reach in safety the more hospitable shores of America. That very day he was arrested! I shall not attempt to describe her feelings on

peculiar character of the correspondence of Sarah Curran is its beautiful, childlike simplicity, and fervour of expression, wholly devoid of affectation. Her letters give the idea of a creature of angelic purity and meekness, with all the tenderness and truth of a loving, noble nature.—R. R. M.

receiving a letter from Emmet, informing her that, as she had refused to accompany him, he was determined to remain in Ireland and abide his fate." . . . . When this intelligence reached Sarah Curran it was evident to her that Robert Emmet's doom was sealed; he abode his fate in Ireland, and died on the scaffold.

"A loss of reason, of some months' continuance, spared my poor friend," adds the writer, "the misery of travelling, step by step, through the wilderness of woe which Emmet's trial and execution would have proved to her. As soon as her health permitted she left the residence of her father," &c., &c. What follows in the narrative respecting her departure, for the sake of her father's memory, I omit. Suffice it to say, that during her illness, and after her recovery, her father did not see her. In one of her letters to the friend who published the preceding account, in speaking of the kind and amiable family who had taken her into their house, and made it to this poor, heart-broken, homeless creature, a place of comfort and consolation, she says: "I find a pleasure in reflecting that my father introduced me to the dear Penroses, as if it were to atone for his continued severity towards me." It was while under the hospitable roof of Cowper Penrose of Woodhill, that "she became the object of an ardent and disinterested attachment." "A person of peculiarly engaging manner and de-

portment, Major Henry Sturgeon,[1] son of Lady Anne Wentworth, and grandson, by his maternal descent, of the celebrated Marquis of Rockingham, first met her at the Penrose's. In every member of that family he had a friend who pleaded his cause, and sought to make his suit acceptable to the object of it." At length orders suddenly came for his departure on military duty in a distant land. The united entreaties of all her friends wrung from her "a suppressed consent;" but no sooner was it given than "her heart failed her, and the morning of her wedding-day she implored her kind friends to allow her to proceed no further."

She was married, however, in Glanmire Church, "and was in truth a mourning bride." "One of the four female friends who attended her to church said she was in tears all the way."

Captain Sturgeon was ordered to Sicily, where he was accompanied by his wife, and there she endeavoured to make him happy, and so appeared cheerful herself! In 1808, the English having to abandon Sicily, Sturgeon and his lady returned to England, in a crowded transport, in very tempestuous weather. "A short time before they landed Mrs. Sturgeon gave birth to a delicate and drooping boy, whose death soon after

[1] The writer is mistaken in the rank then held by Sturgeon, which was that of captain.—R. R. M.

seems to have put a finishing stroke to her sufferings at Hythe, in Kent."

In May, 1808, in a letter of Mr. Richard Curran to the author of the memoir of his sister (in "The Literary Souvenir"), Mrs. Henry W——, he announces the death of her "poor friend, his lamented Sarah" (on the 5th of May, 1808), and encloses an unfinished letter, "the last she ever wrote," addressed to Mrs. W.

The following is the "unfinished letter," written eighteen days before her death, referred to by her brother:

Hythe, April 17.

My dear M——,—I suppose you do not know of my arrival from Sicily, or I should have heard from you. I must be very brief in the detail of events which have been so fatal to me, and which followed our departure from that country. A most dreadful and perilous passage occasioned me many frights. I was, on our entrance into the channel, prematurely delivered of a boy, without any assistance, save that of one of the soldier's wives, the only woman on board but myself. The storm being so high that no boat could stand out to sea, I was in imminent danger till twelve next day, when, at the risk of his life, a physician came on board from one of the ships and relieved me. The storm continued, and I got a brain fever, which however passed off. To be short, on landing at Portsmouth, the precious creature for whom I suffered so much God took to himself. The inexpressible anguish I felt

at this event, preying on me, has occasioned the decay of my health. For the last month the contest between life and death has seemed doubtful; but this day having called in a very clever man, he seems not to think me in danger. My disorder is a total derangement of the nervous system, and its most dreadful effects I find in the attack on my mind and spirits. I suffer misery you cannot conceive. I am often seized with heavy perspirations, trembling, and that indescribable horror which you must know if ever you had fever. Write instantly to me. Alas! I want everything to soothe my mind. O my friend, would to heaven you were with me! nothing so much as the presence of a dear female friend would tend to my recovery. But in England you know how I am situated—not one I know intimately. To make up for this my beloved husband is everything to me; his conduct throughout all my troubles surpasses all praise. Write to me, dear M——, and tell me how to bear all these things. I have, truly speaking, cast all my care on the Lord; but oh! how our weak natures fail every day, every hour, I may say. On board the ship, when all seemed adverse to hope, it is strange how an over-strained trust in certain words of our Saviour gave me such perfect faith in his help, that, although my baby was visibly pining away, I never doubted his life for a moment. "He who gathers the lambs in his arms," I thought, would look on mine if I had faith in him. This has often troubled me since.

Tears—silence—stillness—these are the comments, the only comments, these mournful words

of the last letter of Sarah Curran admit of. Her last request was, to be buried under the favourite tree at The Priory, beneath which her beloved sister was interred. "She was spared the cruelty of a refusal." It was after her death, adds the writer of the memoir, that Mr. Curran said, "He would not have his lawn turned into a churchyard." The writer was mistaken—the request was refused, but not in the unfeeling manner above-mentioned; and this I state on the authority of one who was charged with the painful task of conferring with the father on the subject of his dying daughter's request.

Lord Cloncurry informed me, that when he spoke with Curran on the subject, his sole objection was on the ground of the misrepresented motives which would be assigned for the interment in a place not consecrated. He said when he had the remains of a beloved child, the sister of Sarah, interred in the lawn, at The Priory, he was accused of impiety—the burial was called an unchristian one; and if he consented to another interment there, his enemies would repeat their old calumnies and outcries against him.

Lord Cloncurry urged on him what he conceived to be the necessity of complying with the dying wish of his poor child. But he urged his suit in vain. The remains of his daughter were conveyed to Ireland, and they rest with those of

her father's family at Newmarket, and even as I have reason to believe in accordance with her latest wishes.

"In person," says the author of the memoir in "The Literary Souvenir," "Mrs. S. was about the ordinary size; her hair and eyes black. Her complexion was fairer than is usual with black hair, and was a little freckled. Her eyes were large, soft, and brilliant, and capable of the greatest variety of expression. Her aspect in general indicated reflection, and pensive abstraction from the scene around her. Her wit was keen and playful, but chastened; although no one had a keener perception of humour or ridicule. Her musical talents were of the first order: she sang with exquisite taste. I think I never heard so harmonious a voice." [1]

Is there no duty left undone to the memories of Robert Emmet and of Sarah Curran, by the collector of those records (scanty though they be) of their short career and its sad story?

He has pointed out the neglected grave of Sarah Curran, but he has not stigmatised, as it deserves to have been, the shameful neglect that has left that spot, where the remains of Emmet's "own beloved Sarah" are laid, without a stone to bear her name, or remind us of those virtues of a constant, loving nature which endeared her to Robert Emmet.

[1] "Literary Souvenir," 1831, p. 346.

The death of Mrs. Sturgeon is thus recorded in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for 1808 (vol. i. p. 468): "May 5th, 1808, at Hythe, in Kent, of a rapid decline, aged 26, Sarah, wife of Captain Henry Sturgeon, youngest daughter of the Right Hon. J. P. Curran, Master of the Rolls in Ireland."

The late Mr. William Henry Curran has been led into error respecting a monumental inscription in honour of the memory of Mrs. Sarah Curran, the mother of J. P. Curran, said to exist in the churchyard at Newmarket. In reference to this inscription, the words of Mr. W. H. Curran are the following: "Her remains lie in the churchyard of Newmarket; over them is the following epitaph, written by Mr. Curran:

"Here lies the body of
SARAH CURRAN.
She was marked by many years,
Many talents,
Many virtues,
Few failings,
No crime.
This frail memorial was placed here by a
Son
Whom she loved." [1]

In all probability J. P. Curran wrote the lines in question, and intended to have them inscribed either on a tombstone over his mother's grave, or a mural slab in the adjoining church; but the in-

[1] "Life of Curran," 1st edition, 1819, vol. i.

tention was never carried into effect. All the biographers of Curran have been led into the same error on the subject of this supposed tomb.

A gentleman of high intelligence, who had, previously to my visit, made the same inquiries for me, wrote the following lines on the subject: "I examined every tombstone in the churchyard of Newmarket, and can state that no such thing now exists in it. I examined the interior of the church also, and it is not there. I spoke to several of the inhabitants of Newmarket, and they never saw or heard of such an inscription. The sexton has been in his office for more than 40 years (46, I think), and he never saw one or heard of it."

No such epitaph is to be found over the remains of Mrs. Sarah Curran, of my own knowledge I can assert with perfect certainty. I visited the churchyard of Newmarket in August, 1858, and searched in vain for the epitaph above referred to. No such epitaph, I was assured by aged persons, some of whom had been at the interment of the remains of Mrs. Curran, had ever been placed over the remains of J. P. Curran's mother. There is indeed a tombstone over them and the remains that were buried there a little later of a beloved member of her family who bore her name, and that tombstone bears the following inscription:

Here lies the body
of
BOYLE PHILPOT,
Who died 25th August, 1751,
Aged 52 years.
He lived and died lamented.

The Boyle Philpot whose tomb is thus inscribed, was the father of Mrs. Sarah Curran.

In another part of the churchyard, on the left-hand side of the avenue leading to the church, near the outer gate, there are two graves of members of the Philpot family thus inscribed:

Sacred to the memory
of
JOHN PHILPOT, ESQ.,
Who died July the 18th, 1832,
Aged 32 years.

The inscription on the other tombstone is as follows:

To the memory
of
LYSAGHT PHILPOT,
Who died in 1828,
Aged 73 years.

Mrs. Sturgeon was called after her grandmother, Mrs. Sarah Curran, for whom she had very strong feelings of affection, and by whom she was no less strongly loved.

The fact is, that Mrs. Sturgeon held the relatives of her mother and her grandmother in higher regard and respect than those of her father; and on the last occasion of her visiting Newmarket, either immediately previous or sub-

sequent to her marriage, her grandmother, when parting with her, said "she hoped, as their hearts had never been separated in this world, their remains might be laid in the same grave." No doubt the remembrance of this desire did not pass away from the mind of her beloved grandchild, even when she was far away in a foreign country, or when she was dying in England; and it is remarkable that the desire above-mentioned should be carried into effect, not only by the burial of both in the same grave, but by the deaths of both within a period of a year and two months. Mrs. Sarah Curran died the 31st of March, 1807; Mrs. Sarah Sturgeon died the 5th May, 1808.

Old Mrs. Curran's death is thus recorded in "The Gentleman's Magazine," vol. lxxvii. part i. p. 283:

March 1st, 1807, at Newmarket, county Cork, Mrs. Curran, mother of the Right Hon. John Philpot Curran, Master of the Rolls in Ireland.

The mother of J. P. Curran, Sarah Philpot, was descended from a family of good repute, and well respected in the county Cork. She was born about 1727, and died at the age of 80. The grave of Mrs. Sarah Curran is on the right-hand side of the avenue leading to the church, about midway, or rather nearer the church, and near a tomb of the Aldworth family, with an iron grating round it.

The Rev. Mr. Beechinor, P.P. of Newmarket

for the last 29 years, addressed a letter to the editor of one of the Cork papers, dated October 1st, 1856, correcting a gross error and misstatement which had been fallen into, respecting the burial-place of Mrs. Sturgeon, in Finden's "Beauties of Moore." Mr. Beechinor expresses his great surprise that so erroneous a statement should be made in the above-mentioned work, as that Mrs. Sturgeon had been buried in the grounds of her father's residence, called "The Priory," near Rathfarnham.

The error alluded to by Mr. Beechinor was the following. In the story of "The Exile," published in a work illustrated by Finden, the following very erroneous statement appeared: "Mrs. Sturgeon, in accordance with her own earnest desire, was buried beside her sister Gertrude, in the garden of The Priory, her father's residence near Dublin."

The writer was wholly misinformed. The remains of Curran's poor daughter Sarah were not buried in the grounds or garden of that residence of her father, where she had been treated, alas! with such great harshness. A favourite child, indeed, of Curran was interred there—a daughter, named Gertrude. This child was the idol of her father. It was not a large share of his parental affection that child might be said to have possessed, but rather the whole stock of love that was at his disposal.

The late Mr. William Murphy, of Mountmerrion, was on very intimate terms with Curran when he lost this favourite child, whose untimely death was the result of a fall from a window. Mr. Murphy, before the interment of the child's remains, visited the unhappy father, and found him in a state of such violent sorrow as might be termed frantic grief. Frequently have I heard Mr. Murphy relate the pitiable and fearful condition in which he found Curran. He told Mr. Murphy he would not suffer his beloved child's remains to be taken from The Priory—he would have them buried in the grounds, in a place where the grave could be seen from the window of his study; and accordingly there the remains of his child were buried, in opposition to the opinion, very strongly urged, of his friend Murphy; who thought that the feelings which actuated Curran in this matter would be misinterpreted, and that the burial of his child in unconsecrated ground would be considered an act of impiety, and an evidence of principles adverse to religion.

The child, however, was buried in a vault which Curran had caused to be constructed for her final resting-place, in the lawn of The Priory, near Rathfarnham, very near the house. There was originally an enclosed space over the grave, fenced in with shrubs, but these have now nearly disappeared, and a small square monumental

metal plate was inserted in the slab over the grave, with the following inscription:

Here
Lies the body
of
GERTRUDE CURRAN,
Fourth daughter of JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN,
Who departed this life
October the 6th, 1792.
Aged twelve
years.

In answer to some inquiries of mine respecting the precise spot in which the remains of Mrs. Sturgeon were buried in Newmarket churchyard, I received the following communication from the Rev. Mr. Beechinor, of Newmarket, who has been about 29 years parish priest of that town:

About seven years ago the grave of Mrs. Sturgeon, in the churchyard of Newmarket, was opened to bury a near relative, and the breastplate on her coffin was found in a high state of preservation, with the following inscription: "Sarah Sturgeon, died July, 1808." I send you the names of some of the inhabitants of Newmarket who attended the funeral of Mrs. Sturgeon, and who still distinctly remember the interment, and the late hour of the evening when the funeral cortege arrived in the town: Mr. William Curran (cousin-german to Sarah Curran), Mrs. Robert Philpot, Mr. William Bunworth, Mr. John Greany, and Mr. Michael Brennan. I might name several others, still living. The plate above referred to was in the hands

of Mr. Hartney, postmaster of Newmarket, who gave me therefrom the above inscription.

J. BEECHINOR.

A statement was made to me by a professional gentleman of high character, and of long standing in the immediate vicinity of Newmarket, that Colonel Sturgeon had sent home from Sicily a marble tombstone, with an inscription, to be placed over his wife's grave at Newmarket, and that by mistake the stone was sent, many years ago, to Newberry, in the same county, instead of Newmarket, and had been lost sight of altogether. Another person, of a respectable station in life, informed me that it was to Mallow it had been sent, and not Newberry.

I called on the eminent antiquarian writer and Irish archæological scholar, my friend Mr. John Windele, of Blaris Castle, Cork, to throw some light on those conflicting statements, and received the following reply from that gentleman:

Cork, 27th April, 1857.

My dear Sir—I delayed sending you the copy of the inscription on S. Curran's coffin, until I had made inquiry after the monument, which you said you had learned was left in a churchyard near Mallow by a mistake. I some time since heard that this churchyard was that of Newberry, about four miles west of the town, and the error arose from confounding Newmarket with Newberry. I thereupon wrote to my friend, the parish priest, as also to a Protestant friend,

whose place of worship was Newberry church; from the former I have obtained a letter, and from the latter a personal visit to-day. The priest says, as the result of his inquiries: "Neither the rector of Newberry (which is in my parish) nor the sexton know anything of this stone; still I shall not relax my exertions, and if possible shall poke it out."

The Protestant layman assures me that there is neither a stone nor a momument there, answering in any way the object of my inquiry. He adds, that the rector informed him that a Counsellor Curran, from Dublin, searched the place some four or five years since, and could find no trace of this missing memorial.

I am disposed to regard this evidence as conclusive with regard to Newberry; but, like my friend, the priest, I shall continue on the alert for further information. The following is a copy of the paper I showed you, headed,

"CURRAN'S DAUGHTER.

"Mrs. Sturgeon lies buried in the churchyard at Newmarket, under the walnut tree. There is no tomb, nor mound, nor headstone over her. There was a stone cut at Naples, but it was never sent home. Mr. Leahy Arthur, of Cork, saw it there.

" The grave mound was erased at the building of the present church. The body was buried in the earth. There is no vault. The inscription on the coffin-plate is: Mrs. Sarah Sturgeon, fifth daughter of the Right Hon. J. P. Curran, died May 5th, 1808, aged 26 years."

I wrote to Mr. Leahy Arthur, on the receipt

of Mr. Windele's letter, alluding to the reference made to him; and, in reply to my letter, he assured me he had no information whatever on the subject, but recommended me to apply to another gentleman of the name of Leahy, who had been abroad, and might possibly know something of the matter in question.

I now determined on visiting Newmarket, and, previously to my visit, had some special inquiries made for me by an intelligent person, accustomed to deal with questions of evidence.

George Smith, Esq., of Newmarket, informed the gentleman who made the first inquiries for me on the spot, that he had heard a Mr. Leahy of Cork had seen, in some part of Italy, a monumental stone that was to have been sent home and erected over the grave of Miss Curran. That stone had never reached Newmarket.

William Curran, the nephew of J. P. Curran, informed the gentleman above referred to, that the Rev. Mr. Aldworth, now residing in a southern district of the county Cork, had informed him many years ago that Colonel Sturgeon had sent home a monumental stone, to be placed over the remains of his wife in Newmarket; but it never reached its destination. He had heard it stated, but he could not affirm, that the stone was brought to Ireland, had been detained in the Custom-house in Dublin for some time, and had been sent by mistake to Newberry, in the county Cork,

instead of Newmarket, but had never more been heard of.

I had inquiries made at Newberry, of the Protestant and Catholic clergy of that parish, of the sexton and clerk of the church, and the result of those inquiries diligently made for me was, that no such tombstone had ever reached Newberry.

In the course of my inquiries at Newmarket, I communicated with eight or nine persons who had been present at the interment of the remains of Mrs. Sturgeon. Mr. Hartney, postmaster of Newmarket, was present on that occasion, and at the burial of a son of William Curran in the same grave, many years subsequently. The coffin of Mrs. Sturgeon was then exposed. The coffin-plate had fallen off; it was taken out of the grave by Mr. Hartney, and it remained in his possession for some days, and while in his hands he took a copy of it, but he has lost the inscription. Mr. Hartney said that the copy of the inscription sent me by Mr. Windele was correct, except in one particular—the word "Mrs." was not on the plate. It began, "Sarah Sturgeon," &c. He states further that a portion of the coffin was broken on that occasion, and a very strong odour of some spirituous liquor, used evidently for the preservation of the remains, was diffused around the grave. Mr. Hartney is of opinion that no tombstone had ever been sent home.

Mrs. Hartney, the mother of the postmaster, informed me she had a perfect recollection of the funeral of Mrs. Sturgeon. It was by her own special request that she was buried in the same grave that her grandmother was buried in —the mother of John Philpot Curran.

I do not believe there is a civilized country in Europe in which it is more difficult to get exact information, on any subject that does not immediately concern the pecuniary interests, the polemical principles, or the political views of the parties inquired of, than Ireland. This observation is not applicable alone to one class of the community, however it may be called—high, low, or middle. The complaint has perpetually to be made, by persons who seek information on matters that have transpired within the sphere of the remembrance, and the limits of the locality, of parties to whom inquiries are addressed, that impressions of things inquired after and recalled assume all the importance of facts—get confounded in people's minds—so that it becomes absolutely impossible to discriminate between what they believe to be true, and know of their own certain knowledge to be so.

In bewilderments of judgment thus caused, it only remains for the inquirer to investigate, himself, on the spot, the matter which he desires to ascertain. And if he has to carry back the recollection of people—of country people especially

—to periods of ten, twenty, or even twice twenty years distant from the present time, the inquirer must examine the parties of whom information is sought in the presence of one another, and as near as possible to the locality—be it place of birth, or death, or burial—of the persons who are the subjects of our inquiry, or of the events or things connected with them which are the objects of our researches; and above all things be it remembered, that "fair and easy goes far in the day," with regard to time spent in such pursuits, and that the inquirer's motto must be, *"Festina lente."*

It was by acting on those ideas with eight or nine individuals, all far advanced in years, some of them in extreme old age, who had been present at the interment of the remains of Mrs. Sturgeon, that their conflicting testimony, in relation to the precise spot that was the site of her grave, could be brought to bear in one direction on some one or other important particular, and eventually to concur with regard to the precise spot where the great walnut tree grew in the churchyard, which overshadowed a considerable portion of the burial-ground, and by all was admitted to have been close to the head of the grave of Mrs. Sturgeon.

Twenty years had elapsed since that tree had fallen (broken down by the violence of a tempest —not torn up, for the roots still remained in the

ground, though covered thinly with the soil). Several knew of the existence of the roots, but some members only of the Curran family were aware, that the spot where these were was close to a tombstone and an inscription, recording the death of the father of Mrs. Sarah Curran.

With these indications I had the mould removed from the spot where the well-known walnut tree stood, and there I found the roots were of a tree whose magnitude must have far exceeded that of any other tree in the churchyard. The persons who assisted at the burial of William Curran's son, some years ago, in the grave of Mrs. Sturgeon, a little to the right of that of Mrs. Curran, or rather side by side with it, had no difficulty now in recognizing the grave that was the object of inquiry.

The tomb of Sarah (Curran) Sturgeon lies alongside and close to the grave, with a tombstone, of Boyle Philpot, on the right-hand side of the avenue entrance leading to the church, and immediately behind the stump of the walnut tree that formerly existed at the head of the grave of Mrs. Sturgeon, and which fell down in the memorable storm of 1839. I have had great difficulty in ascertaining the precise spot where her remains were interred; and now, beyond all doubt, the precise spot is fixed and indicated by a very large mass of stone (unwrought) which

I had conveyed to the churchyard and placed over the grave, at the head of it.

The best guiding-mark to this grave is the tombstone of the grave, on the left hand of it nearest the church, of old Boyle Philpot, the father of Mrs. Sarah Curran, who was interred there in 1807, some fourteen months before her granddaughter Sarah's remains were laid beside her own, in pursuance of a wish expressed to Sarah Curran, her favourite grandchild, that their remains should be interred in the same place of burial, namely, that of her (old Mrs. Curran's) father.

The husband of Mrs. Curran was not interred in the churchyard at Newmarket, but in an old burying-place of Dromore, about a mile distant from the town.

In 1836, I received the following account from my fellow-passenger, Captain Masson, on board the "Emerald," on our voyage to America, of his intimate friend and brother-officer in Egypt, Captain Sturgeon:

Captain Henry Sturgeon, of the Royal Staff Corps, joined the Royal Artillery the 4th of April, 1796, a second lieutenant. He continued in the Artillery till 1803, when he was appointed to a company in the Royal Staff Corps. He was in the expedition to Egypt. He commanded two six-pounders on the 8th of March, 1801. He was an active, intelligent officer. He was wounded in the action of the 13th of March.

Captain Masson believes him to have been born in France. His mother was a daughter of Lord Fitzwilliam, and had eloped with his father. An elder brother of his was born in France. His means were ample—at least he always appeared to have money at his command; it was said he was the natural son of a distinguished nobleman. Captain Sturgeon was of middle size, a smart, active man, a very penetrating eye, pleasing smile, and of elegant address; altogether of a very prepossessing appearance. When in Egypt, he was about twenty-four years of age. On his return to England, he was appointed to the Horse Artillery; subsequently he was quartered at Canterbury with Captain Masson till he was appointed to the Staff Corps. In the Duke of Wellington's despatches I find the services honourably mentioned, on several occasions, of Major Sturgeon of the Royal Staff Corps. His conduct at the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo is particularly noticed in the despatch dated the 20th of January, 1812; in several preceding ones, his services are also made honourable mention of. He was killed in the engagement near Vic Bigorre, in 1814.

In "The Gentleman's Magazine" for April, 1814, p. 417, the death of Colonel Sturgeon is thus recorded in the list of deaths in the preceding month of March:

16th March, 1814.—During the march of the British army upon Vic, Colonel Sturgeon lost his life. This place is surrounded for nearly two miles by vineyards, among which this gallant officer having unguardedly advanced, a shot from a concealed enemy terminated his existence. Colonel Sturgeon had distinguished himself on many occasions, and his loss is greatly lamented.

The Marquess of Wellington, in a despatch to Earl Bathurst, dated Tarbes, March 20, 1814, gives an account of the attack on the French in the vineyards and town of Bigorre, and praises the conduct of several officers, but no mention is made therein of Colonel Sturgeon; but in the accompanying list of killed and wounded, we find in the list of killed the following: "March 19, 1814, General's Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel H. Sturgeon, Royal Staff Corps."

Extract from "London Gazette Extraordinary," Wednesday, 5th February, 1812:

DESPATCH FROM GENERAL VISCOUNT WELLINGTON.

I have likewise particularly to report to your lordship the conduct of Major Sturgeon, of the Royal Staff Corps. He constructed and placed for us the bridge over the Agueda, without which the enterprise could not have been attempted; and he afterwards materially assisted Lieutenant-General Graham and myself in our reconnoissance of the place, on which the plan of attack was founded; and he finally conducted

the 2nd battalion 5th Regiment, as well as the 2nd Cacadores, to their points of attack.

Viscount Wellington, in a despatch to Lord Liverpool, dated from Gallegos, 20th January, 1812, refers to the services of Major Sturgeon, at the storming and capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and the preceding operations.

In a despatch of Lord Wellington to Earl Bathurst, dated Flores de Avila (near Salamanca), July 24, 1812, the services of Lieutenant-Colonel Sturgeon, who must have been promoted subsequently to the date of the former despatch, are thus referred to: "I am particularly indebted to the officers of the Staff Corps for the assistance I received from them, particularly Lieutenant-Colonel Sturgeon," &c.[1]

CHILDREN OF J. P. CURRAN.

John Philpot Curran, born in 1750, called to the bar in 1775, deceased the 14th October, 1817. Married, in 1774, Sarah, daughter of Richard Creagh, Esq., M.D., of Newmarket.[2] By this marriage—the result of which was a separation in 1795[3]—there were seven children: 1. Richard,

[1] "Annual Register," 1812, p. 233.

[2] In "Pue's Occurrences," 3rd June, 1760, we find, in the list of deaths, the decease recorded of Mrs. Creagh, wife of Richard Creagh, Esq., M.D.

[3] From "The Dublin Journal," 14th January, 1795:

Criminal Conversation—Court of Exchequer.

"*Curran* a. *Sands.*

We had prepared a very accurate report of the evidence in this

born about 1779, married in 1810, died without issue about 1816. 2. John B. H., entered the navy, attained the rank of captain, died in 1832. 3. William Henry, born about 1794, called to the bar in 1816, died unmarried in 1858. 4. Amelia, born about 1775, died unmarried prior to 1848. 5. Jane, married the Rev. Mr. Taylor,

cause, in which public curiosity was so far interested that the court of Exchequer was filled at a very early hour on Saturday morning, and continued the whole day so crowded as to require the aid of a military guard to preserve order at the several entrances.

Having so far prepared to satisfy the curiosity of our readers, we conceive that no negligence will be imputed to us when we state, as the reason for our declining the insertion of the report, the following notice, served last night at our office, purporting to be signed by the attorney for the plaintiff, Curran, and directed to the printer of this paper:

'Curran, *a.* 'Sands. } 'Sir—You are to take notice that a Bill of Exceptions was taken on behalf of the debts in the Court of Exchequer, on the trial at *Nisi Prius,* on Saturday last, and as this cause is still depending and remains undetermined until the ensuing term, you are requested not to publish or insert any account of such trial in "The Dublin Journal."

'Dated this 16th day of February. 'R. Reeve

'To the Printer of "The Dublin Journal."'

Out of the respect which we bear to the truly learned and venerable judges (the Chief Baron and Baron Smith) who presided in this cause, and from no other motive whatsoever—for we are above timidity or corruption—we shall state merely the general outline of the case, reserving a full account of the trial for a more fit opportunity.

This was an action against the defendant at the suit of J. P. Curran, Esq., for criminal conversation with the plaintiff's wife. The damages were laid at £2,000. The jury found a verdict for £50.

In copying the notice we have adhered literally to the copy served.

Incumbent of Clifden. 6. Gertrude, born in 1780, died unmarried in 1792. 7. Sarah, born in 1781, married in 1805, died in 1808, without issue.

Richard, his eldest son, was called to the bar in 1799. In 1807 he was obliged to leave Ireland on account of an action taken against him by the husband of Mrs. Henry Johnston, a melodramatic actress of great personal attractions. In the proceedings in the King's Bench, he is described as deputy of his father in the Rolls Court. In an application made to the King's Bench, 11th May, 1807, the plaintiff asks to be allowed to substitute service of process on the defendant, on the ground of his having fled to England, to evade the service of the court. The court refused the application. See "Annual Register." He married a widow lady of fortune, Mrs. Wysell, of York-place, London, the 31st of July, 1810, and very soon after, he became insane, and lived six years in that most calamitous of all conditions.

Amelia, the eldest daughter of J. P. Curran, never married. She visited the Continent about 1821, and in 1822 was residing in Naples, when I became acquainted with her. She appeared to be then about forty years of age, and in bad health, labouring occasionally under hypochondriasis; and at periods when this disorder depressed her spirits severely, she used to sit in her drawing-room with the windows closed and all

light excluded for many days, at times even for weeks together. She was mild, gentle, and amiable, notwithstanding those occasional fits of melancholy. She painted in oils admirably. A copy of a celebrated picture of Murillo, made by her at Rome, of great excellence, was given by her to her old friend, the late Lord Cloncurry, and now exists in the Roman Catholic Chapel of Blackrock, near Dublin, having been presented by his lordship to the Rev. Mr. Ennis.

Miss Amelia Curran from Naples went back to Rome, where she had already spent much time, and she returned no more from the Eternal City. I have been informed by the late Lord Cloncurry, that she became a Roman Catholic in Rome, and died there in that religion. The following passage, from the "Memoirs of Lord Cloncurry," will show the estimation in which he held her:

My friendship with Curran and his family was for many years of the closest and heartiest kind. During the past year (1848), I had the melancholy satisfaction of marking my recollection of it, by causing a memorial of her own worth, and of my continued esteem, to be placed near the final resting-place of the eldest of his daughters. A tablet, designed and executed by Hogan, and bearing the following inscription, has been erected in the church of St. Isidore, at Rome, within the last few months:

AMELIA CURRAN
Was the most talented and virtuous daughter of
JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN
Who fearlessly pleaded the cause of his country and
His oppressed fellow-citizens,
Before corrupt Judges and hostile Juries.
They were true Patriots.
To their memory this tablet is inscribed by
Their surviving friend, Valentine, second Lord Cloncurry.

The second daughter of J. P. Curran, who married a clergyman of the name of Taylor, incumbent I believe, of the parish of Clifden, near Bristol, has manifested in a very graceful and becoming manner her respect for her father's memory, by erecting a mural monument in the church to which her husband is attached, in honour of his name, genius, and patriotism. This lady was one of the three children of J. P. Curran, who attended him on his last illness, and were with him when he died. The other two were Captain J. B. N. Curran, R. N., and Mr. W. H. Curran.

MEMOIR OF LEONARD MACNALLY

LEONARD MACNALLY, born in Dublin in 1752, was the son of a respectable trader. He commenced his career in the business of a grocer in his native city.

The following advertisement appears for the first time in the "Hibernian Journal," June, from 7th to 10th, 1771:—

Leonard MacNally, grocer, in St. Mary's Lane, near Capel Street, has opened a Bordeaux Wine-cellar, and sells (for ready money only) Wines of every denomination, the choicest in their qualities, on the lowest terms and in the smallest quantities; also fresh Teas, roasted Coffee, Spirits, Sagoe, Sirup de Capelaire, Hives, Capers, Anchovies, Miserable, etc., and humbly hopes for a continuance of that encouragement which he has hitherto met with.

N.B.—The house next door to his to be let.

Mr. MacNally, however, abandoned the sale of capers and anchovies, wines and spirits "in the smallest quantities," for the study of law and the privilege of becoming "a gentleman of the bar."

Early in 1774 Mr. Leonard MacNally was entered a student of the Middle Temple. He prac-

tised for a short time at the English bar. He returned to Ireland in 1766, but again visited London, and in 1783 figured at public meetings, and made some flaming speeches in favour of the memorable coalition between Fox and North. He acted as counsel at Lord Hood's election. He was for some time editor of "The Public Leger," and was afterwards connected with other papers.

In 1776 he had been called to the Irish bar, where he soon obtained practice in the humbler walks of his profession, in criminal proceedings especially, and some reputation as a man of ready ability and business-like habits—a clever advocate, well versed in crown law.

The legal career of MacNally in his native country commenced with a "dirty act," and it terminated, as it commenced, in a discreditable manner.

In a remarkable work, "The Grand Juries of Westmeath from 1727 to 1853, with Historical Notices," written and printed by John Charles Lyons, Esq., of Ladiston (in 2 vols., 1853), referring to a trial respecting the legitimacy of the marriage of General William Naper, father of William Lenox Naper, Esq., of Littleton, in which case Leonard MacNally, counsel for Lord Sherborne, was employed against Naper, Mr. Lyons observes:—

Previously to the last trial, in 1790, the late Leonard MacNally, who had kept a grocer's shop in Mary's Lane, Dublin, where he had been unfortunate in trade, settled in London, and was practising at the Old Bailey; he was brought over to this country by Mr. Stackpool, who had interested himself very much for Lord Sherborne. He (MacNally) wrote a pamphlet in 1790, entitled, I think, "The Duty and Authority of Jurors," which was widely circulated, particularly in this county. On this trial were produced two witnesses on the part of Lord Sherborne—Mr. Hickey, an old dilapidated attorney picked up in the purlieus of the Old Bailey, and Sarah Taylor. This Hickey swore that he had been employed by General Naper while in London, and where the general resided for some years after his return from Germany, to transact some law business for him, and amongst others to draw up a deed of annuity or rent-charge for Anne Fitzgerald, of three hundred pounds a year during her life, chargeable on the Westmeath estate, and actually produced a deed of annuity or rent-charge for Anne Fitzgerald of three hundred pounds a year during her life, chargeable on the Westmeath estate, and actually, in support of his testimony, produced his bill of costs book. After his examination was over, a young lawyer of the name of Eyre Burton Powell, stood up and offered evidence to the court. He was sworn and examined. He deposed that he was present some time before at the Old Bailey, where he saw the witness (Hickey) tried and found guilty of perjury. By what means his discharge from prison was effected, did not at that time transpire.

Sarah Taylor swore she was sister to the person with whom General Naper and his lady lodged while in London; that she saw several officers visit and dine with the general, but that the lady never dined with them; that she saw the last witness, Hickey, frequently there, and dining with the general and his lady.

On her cross-examination by J. P. Curran, she was obliged to admit that she was only "cinder-wench" in the house, and that she and Hickey had travelled over from London with a gentleman who had paid all their expenses.

Beresford Burton, who stated Naper's case, abused Leonard MacNally in the most unmeasured language, and charged him with doing the dirty work of the opposite party, and with procuring Hickey and Taylor in London, and bringing them over here.

A few days after this, MacNally sent a message to Mr. Burton: a general meeting of the bar took place, when it was resolved that Burton was not to meet MacNally. [1]

This decision had the effect of putting MacNally out of the pale of legal society on circuit. He made up for this affront and its consequences by seeking popularity and showing off as a patriot.

Some years passed over before he could get a gentleman to meet him in the field, ardently as he desired to have an affair of honour for the retrieval of his character. At length, however, he was fortunate enough to fix a quarrel on a

[1] Lyons' "Westmeath Grand Juries," etc., p. 201.

brother barrister of some reputation—then a facetious gentleman too, and of free and easy manners and principles like himself—Sir Jonah Barrington.

On the 29th of April, 1793, a duel was fought between Mr. MacNally and Sir Jonah, and both parties were slightly wounded on the occasion. Sir Jonah's second was a Mr. Henry Harding, and MacNally's was John Sheares, who was accompanied to the ground by his brother Henry and Mr. Bagenal Beauchamp Harvey.

"Both of the latter," says Sir Jonah, "were, I believe, amicably disposed; but a negotiation could not be admitted, and to it we went." [1] The express acknowledgment of the amicable disposition of Henry Sheares and Harvey, and omission of any mention of a desire for an arrangement on the part of John, shows pretty plainly Sir Jonah's opinion that no such desire was manifested by him.

Sir Jonah has given a ridiculous version of this rencontre, in which he damages as much as possible, but in the most "facetious" way imaginable, "his friend" MacNally. He represents the quarrel as fastened on him by the latter on very little provocation. "MacNally," he says, "was a good-natured, hospitable, talented, dirty fellow, and had, by the latter qualification, so disgusted the circuit bar, that they refused to receive him at

[2] *Vide* "Irish Sketches," vol. ii., p. 27.

their mess—a cruelty I set my face against, and every summer-circuit endeavoured to vote him into the mess, but always ineffectually; his neglect of his person, the shrillness of his voice, and his frequenting low company, being assigned as reasons which never could be set aside." But, according to Sir Jonah, the bar would not only not mess with him, but they would not fight with him, and this, in Sir Jonah's estimation, was "the cruelest cut of all." It reminds one of Tom Cringle's serious objection to either feeding or fighting with the Americans. Harry Deane Grady, it seems, had refused to fight MacNally; and in his despair of getting any one to fight him, according to Sir Jonah, he fixed a quarrel on himself, without much rhyme or reason, for the mere purpose of making a character at the expense of Sir Jonah's condescension, whose own character was of course already made.

The plain facts of the affair are these:—Sir Jonah Barrington, in 1793, in the course of his professional duties, took occasion to speak of the members of the United Irishmen in opprobrious terms, and he was called to an account for so doing by a member of that society, Mr. Leonard MacNally.

In one of the well-known organs of the United Irishmen, the "Northern Star," of the 3rd of March, 1797, the duel between these gentlemen is mentioned as having occurred in consequence

of Counsellor Barrington, at the trial of a gentleman for an assault, having used disparaging language with respect to the United Irishmen society, "of which" (adds the editor) "Mr. MacNally is a member." The latter assertion is deserving of notice, for reasons already stated. There can be no question but the editor of the "Northern Star" had good means of knowing what leading men were members of that society, and who, belonging to the popular party, were not.

It will be seen in the reports of the early proceedings of the United Irishmen of the North, that on some occasions Mr. MacNally took an active part in their proceedings, especially in conjunction with Tone and Neilson. As one of the original members of the Society, he also occasionally took part in the proceedings of the Dublin "Union," but seldom at public meetings. He was a chamber lawyer to the leaders—an entertaining entertainer of the gay and good fellows of the society. He was the advocate of the members when they got into trouble, and he advocated their cause invariably, not only with apparent zeal and heartiness, but sometimes even with success. He had the confidence of most of the Dublin leaders, but not of all. He was suspected of treachery by some of them even previously to 1798. Israel Milliken of Belfast, one of the United Irishmen of the North, of well-known in-

tegrity, in reply to a recent inquiry of mine, put to him by Miss Mary M'Cracken, respecting the confidence placed in the fidelity of MacNally by the Northerns engaged in the affairs of 1798, said that "to his knowledge MacNally was strongly suspected in the North of treachery."

MacNally being a facetious barrister, a great liberal, and a flaming patriot, and a successful advocate in criminal cases, was extremely popular with his fellow citizens, and "hail fellow, well met" in all social circles of the United Irishmen. In April, 1794, the emissary of the French government, Jackson, arrived in Dublin, accompanied by the London solicitor, Cockayne, who was the agent of Mr. Pitt, and within a day or two of their arrival they dined with Mr. Leonard MacNally. To use the words of the attorney-general on the trial of Jackson, in reference to this entertainment:—

> Mr. MacNally, no doubt, merely from that hospitality in which Irishmen are never deficient, invites the two strangers to dine with him, and as a man of manners does always, he selected an agreeable company to meet them. Mr. Simon Butler and a Mr. Lewins were, among others, present at this entertainment; the conversation was naturally turned by the gentleman who had come on this mad mission, to the state of the country. Much talk there was about the discontented state of the kingdom; anxiously did he inquire

how far the people would be willing to rise if there should be an invasion by the French.

Here plainly it appears that MacNally must have been cognizant of the treasonable objects of Jackson. Why did the government then leave him unmolested or unprosecuted? The attorney-general admitted the treasonable objects of Jackson were discussed at MacNally's table: he was implicated then in a guilty knowledge of them. How fortunate was Mr. Leonard MacNally, and how kind and forbearing the government of that day was to him!

The plot for entrapping the popular leaders of the society of United Irishmen was duly hatched under the roof of Mr. Leonard MacNally, and at that gentleman's hospitable board an interview was arranged for Jackson with Rowan, then in Newgate.

On the trial of Jackson, Cockayne, under cross-examination, said:—

He had known Mr. MacNally when he practised at the English bar, and so had Mr. Jackson known him. MacNally was counsel at Lord Hood's election; believes he saw him on the hustings there three or four times. Does not know Mr. MacNally's motive for asking him to dinner on his arrival in Dublin. He, Cockayne, had some business to transact here. MacNally had done some business for him.

Jackson had been his client for many years and his old friend, and had known him ten years, when he made

the communication to Mr. Pitt about Mr. Jackson. He mentioned likewise to Mr. Pitt that Mr. Jackson owed him a considerable sum of money on the balance of an account, about £300; that if he, Cockayne, interfered and should be a sufferer thereby, he should think it hard to be a loser as to that sum. Mr. Pitt made answer, he believes, "You must not be a loser."

Being further pressed about the sum due by Jackson, he said: "The sum due to him was between £250 and £300."

He said, he (Cockayne) had been tried for perjury in 1793, in an affidavit that he swore, but was acquitted, he hoped honourably, but admitted that "he had sworn the affidavit incautiously," not being able to prove an attendance in a court which he had sworn to.

We have already seen that, although the treasonable communications between Jackson and the United Irishmen, who were introduced to the former at the house of Leonard MacNally, "the counsellor" was left at large, while Jackson was prosecuted, and Tone, to avoid prosecution, had to fly the country, MacNally was not molested, and being an United Irishman, and generally employed as the professional advocate of the persons of that society who had been arrested and arraigned on the charge of treason, his means of acquiring information were very considerable; and it was only discovered at his death, when an application was made for the continuance to his

family of the stipend he had been in the receipt of, that government had availed themselves of his services, and had conferred a pension of £300 a year upon him for his private services.

The fact was first publicly stated by the late Mr. O'Connell when denouncing the United Irishmen. He pointed out the stupidity of confiding in their supposed secret organization, when one of their own body, and their boasted advocate and defender, Leonard MacNally, was a hireling of the government.

There was a strange coincidence in several crown prosecutions of importance from the date of the criminal proceedings against James Napper Tandy, in 1792, to that of the prosecution of Dr. Sheridan and Thomas Kirwan in 1811, in MacNally's connection with them, and the failure of plans for the defence.

Mr. Leonard MacNally usually contrived to be employed as junior counsel; and there were few cases of importance as state prosecutions in which he was so employed, that the plans agreed on for the defence, and the arrangements made previously to the trials by prisoner's or traverser's counsel, were not disclosed to the law officers of the crown of the time being, to the great astonishment of the leading counsel for the accused parties, and in numerous instances they were thus defeated.

At the time of the trials of Dr. Sheridan and Mr. Kirwan, the fact of the disclosure of the plans of their defence came to the knowledge of the late Mr. O'Connell and also the late Mr. David Lynch.

In June, 1792, in the singular case of Mr. James Napper Tandy against the viceroy, the Earl of Westmoreland, for offering a reward for his (Tandy's) apprehension, Matthew Dowling issued a subpœna against the Lord Lieutenant, and the question was raised by Tandy's counsel and argued before the judges, whether any action could lie against a Lord Lieutenant during his viceroyalty.

Thomas Addis Emmet had advised the startling course with the view of showing that there was in fact and law no viceroy of Ireland then existing, inasmuch as the great seal of Ireland was necessary to the recognition of that office in the Irish courts of law, and that of Great Britain only was affixed to the letters patent appointing his Excellency.

In determining on this course, it was considered by Tandy's leading counsel of the greatest importance to keep their main object from the knowledge of the crown lawyers. That object, however, was disclosed to them by some one of the legal advisers of Tandy, and it was thus frustrated bv one in the confidence of his advisers;

and even then, so early as 1792, a suspicion of treachery attached to Mr. MacNally.

Perhaps to it Lord Edward's caution a little later, with respect to Mr. MacNally's friends, Messrs. Jackson and Cockayne, may be attributed.

The treachery in the case of Tandy led to the same results as in the case of Tone. Tandy having made himself obnoxious to the government, on secret information was involved in a charge of high treason, and like Tone, to save his life, had to fly the country.

Tone was snared; Dr. Reynolds was snared; Archibald Hamilton Rowan was snared; and all had to fly the country to save their lives. But fortunate Counsellor MacNally, the prime mover in this tripartite treason, who introduced the spy of Mr. Pitt and the unfortunate dupe and victim of Cockayne to those Irish gentlemen who were peculiarly obnoxious to the government, was left unmolested, and eventually certainly was not left unrewarded for his services to the state, whatever the precise nature of those services may have been.

A professional man who undertakes to defend the life, liberty, or property of another, and communicates to that man's opponents the secrets of his case, is said to pick his client's brains. The crime of that man can hardly be paralleled for its

turpitude by any other species of villainy, however enormous. Of that crime Mr. Leonard MacNally I believe was guilty on several occasions.

The year 1798 saw the desolation of many homes, previously to that fatal year happy homes. The year 1800 saw the homes of other persons, of the supposed principles of the proscribed and fugitive members of the Society of United Irishmen, bearing evidences of elevated fortunes on the part of the possessors.

In that year Mr. Leonard MacNally emerged from his old abode, No. 57 Dominick Street, to No. 22 Harcourt Street, where he died in 1820.

Of what avail is it to enter into these disgusting details? To that question I answer: the utility of the task entirely depends on the amount of insecurity to treachery which similar disclosures of secret perfidy are calculated to produce, and the obloquy their disclosure is sure to bring sooner or later on those who practise treachery.

In the account of secret service money expenditure we find some items with the initials only of a name prefixed to them—M.N.; for instance: "27th February, 1800—Mr. Cooke, for M.N., £100." Whether Leonard MacNally or not is the person indicated by those initials, it is impossible to say with any certainty, but it is very certain that persons who had pensions granted to

them for secret services are very frequently found recorded in the list of recipients of secret service money in large sums for occasional specific services. I have elsewhere referred to original receipts in my possession for secret service money pension payments, in the handwriting of Leonard MacNally, as I believe, and those well acquainted with his handwriting believe, signed with the initials of a feigned name, J. W., but endorsed by the secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, W. Taylor, Esq., "L. M'N."

It will be borne in mind, in the endorsement of those receipts for moneys paid to spies and informers, the particular services requited are indicated by initials—thus, S.S., O.A., S.A. Of the nature of the first there can be no doubt—secret services—the ordinary stagging, for which blood-money was earned by such miscreants as O'Brien, Reynolds, *et hoc genus omne.* I find the receipts which are endorsed by Mr. Secretary Taylor with the initials O.A., and S.A., are for pensions given to persons who had not come forward as witnesses on trials, but who stagged *sub rosa,* and gave official advice or secret advice to government, as their sly perfidious betrayals of confidence or other disclosures might be designated, without prejudice to their characters in their several localities, and thus preserving an incognito as informers were enabled to turn their neighbours, clients, parishioners, or townspeople to a profitable ac-

count. Thus we find initialled the receipts of such informers as, Counsellor Magan, the Rev. Thomas Barry, of Mallow, John Wilcocks, Esq., etc.

I have elsewhere had to observe, in reference to Mr. MacNally's pension, and the receipt in my possession in his own handwriting, with the initials I. W., but endorsed by Mr. Secretary Taylor L. M'N., that various entries appear in the official list of secret service payments, published by me, of payments made through Mr. John Pollock, one of the registrars of the Court of King's Bench, and Clerk of the Crown for the Leinster Circuit in 1798, to a person who figures under the initials T. W. There are various entries of payments to this worthy secret servant to a considerable amount, on one occasion of £200, another of £150. And it is to be noted that a repayment of a sum advanced to T. W. is entered under date of the 16th June, 1803, "repaid from pension."

I must repeat that I cannot help thinking the mysterious gentleman, the ghost of whose services ever and anon rises up in the initials T. W. in the official list of secret service money payments above referred to, and who long has preserved his incognito in them, is no other than the same individual who figures as I. W. in the original receipt for his quarter's pension, endorsed L. M'N., which is in my possession. The

secretary who thus endorsed that document may have easily mistaken the first initial of that assumed name, which the wary informer had adopted, for it is only with the aid of a magnifying glass that one can pronounce with certainty that the initial in question is an I, and not a T.

I have only further to remind the reader that the secret service money which passed through the hands of Mr. John Pollock was always for persons either engaged in legal pursuits or in some way connected with the administration of justice, as the perversion of it and the corruption of its ministers and agents, in official parlance, was termed in 1798.

Let us suppose the pension, namely of £300, which MacNally was in receipt of to the period of his death in 1820, was conferred on him some years later than 1798, but still during the lifetime of J. P. Curran (for of that fact there can be no question, as the date of one of these receipts in my hands is July the 5th, 1816), can it be reasonably doubted that MacNally had performed "secret services" long previously, of which Curran was in ignorance at that period?

The deception practised on Curran by MacNally was most strikingly and revoltingly exhibited in January, 1798, at the trial of Patrick Finney. MacNally had successfully adopted a suggestion of his colleague to speak against time, in order to enable counsel for the defence to pro-

duce a witness to invalidate the testimony of the approver, O'Brien. MacNally made a speech remarkably able for its inordinate length, and there was sufficient time expended on its delivery to have the witness sought for and brought into court. Curran, in his address to the jury, alluding to the able statement of his friend, giving way to the impulse of his generous feelings, threw his arm over the shoulder of MacNally, and said with evident emotion: "My old and excellent friend, I have long known and respected the honesty of your heart, but never, until this occasion, was I acquainted with the extent of your abilities: I am not in the habit of paying compliments where they are undeserved." Tears fell from Mr. Curran as he hung over his friend and pronounced those few and simple words.

Mr. MacNally was one of the counsel of Robert Emmet, and the only friend who appears to have been allowed to visit him in his prison with the exception of a clergyman, after his conviction.

Robert Emmet was tried the 19th September, 1803. In the same month, and in the preceding month of August of the same year, we find L. N. in the secret service money account, receiving £210. In coupling these two occurrences with the fact that Emmet held communications with MacNally during his confinement, concerning the pains taken by him to conceal his plans, which

communications were reported to the Lord Lieutenant, and made use of in the exculpation of the government from the charge of remissness, and, moreover, that MacNally was entrusted with a letter from Thomas to Robert A. Emmet, which never was delivered to the latter, I would be glad it was shown, as well as said, that an injustice had been done to the memory of Mr. Leonard MacNally.

It is certain that the leading counsel for Dr. Sheridan and Mr. Thomas Kirwan, who were prosecuted by the crown in 1811, on a charge of a violation of the convention act, were ignorant that Mr. MacNally was in the pay of the government when they consulted in his presence, and determined on the line of defence they were to adopt, which it was of so much importance to their clients that the crown lawyers should not be made acquainted with. Mr. MacNally, by the admission of those who deny his treachery, had then been a pensioner of the government upwards of four years. Messrs. O'Connell, Burrowes, Burton, Driscoll, Johnson, Perrin, Furlong, the counsel for the accused Catholic gentlemen, had not the remotest idea, when they discussed their plans of defence in one of the most difficult cases to deal with that had occurred for many years, that the whole course of action on which they had determined was at the mercy of a man pensioned by the crown,

who appeared amongst them in the character of a popular advocate independent of all state influence.

If this is not playing the traitor in a case where the strongest confidence in the character and position of the advocates was required, I know not how to designate the performance of the part of a popular independent advocate by a gentleman who was secretly dependent on the crown and trammelled by his obligations to its bounty.

But it is stated that injustice has been done to Mr. MacNally by those suspicions which were openly proclaimed by Mr. O'Connell when he made the first revelation to the public that Mr. MacNally had died in the receipt of a pension, and that the fact of its existence had been made known to the late Mr. D. Lynch, the eminent barrister, in a way that left no doubt of its having been paid to Mr. MacNally up to the time of his decease. It has been said, moreover, that injustice has been done to Mr. MacNally in this work with regard to the supposition of his being in the receipt of a pension from the crown when he took upon himself the duties of an advocate of persons prosecuted by the government in 1794, 1798, and 1803. But the fact which I have stated, that Mr. MacNally was pensioned by the crown for some secret service which the government could not make public, and Mr. MacNally could not allow to be made known, is now admitted.

Those who think Mr. MacNally wronged, say: We admit that a pension was granted to him in 1806 or 1807, but we deny that it was in existence in 1794, 1798, or 1803.

I acknowledge that I am ignorant of the time when the pension of £300 a year was conferred, but I produce evidence in the case of Jackson, Tone, and Rowan, to show that there is good reason for believing that it was earned so early as 1794, and even previously, in the case of James Napper Tandy. I am in the possession of original official documentary evidence that shows a person whose initials were L. M'N. was in receipt of a pension of the amount of £300 a year, in July, 1816. Further, I can produce authentic evidence to show that Mr. MacNally was in receipt of a pension very shortly before his death. But admitting that there are not sufficient grounds for believing that certain payments, entered in the accounts of secret service money in 1797, 1798, and 1803, made by Mr. Pollock, the Clerk of the Crown of the Leinster Circuit, were made to Mr. MacNally, I inquire what were the particular services for which a pension was formally conferred on Mr. MacNally in 1806 or 1807, which he deemed it necessary to conceal?

The answer given to this question is, that when the Whigs came into power with Mr. Fox, and the Duke of Bedford was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Mr. MacNally's claims to a

silk gown were strongly urged on the government, and the Lord Lieutenant was deterred from giving a silk gown to a barrister who was in bad odour on his circuit, and was considered to have derogated from his professional character by practising in the criminal courts. But, to make amends for the refusal of the silk gown, the government consented, it is said, to give him a pension of £300 a year. If Mr. MacNally had been in parliament, and voted for the Union, or rendered the government some known service equally signal, one could understand this act of state bounty. But, supposing it was granted to make amends for the refusal of the silk gown, at the instance of some friend of MacNally's, some person of great influence in the new Irish government, must not John Philpot Curran, then one of the leading men of the Whig party, the most intimate and steadfast of all MacNally's friends, have been cognizant of the fact?

There is good ground to believe that he was not cognizant of it; for one who had the best right to know Curran's opinions, and the best right to deal with the written records of them, was at one time disposed to defend the character of MacNally from the suspicions that were excited by Mr. O'Connell's first disclosure of the recently discovered pension in 1820, on inquiry, had found it necessary to abandon his intention.

I have, in conclusion, to call attention to the

items in the secret service money lists of payments made by Mr. Pollock, to which I have already referred, and especially to that original authentic official document in my possession, bearing so strikingly on the subject of this inquiry, and throwing much light on it, which is given in the Appendix:

July 5th, 1816.—Received from W. Taylor, Esq., seventy-five pounds, due the 25th June last.

I. W.[1]

Endorsed by the Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, 5th July, 1816:

L. M'N.

S. A.

But the fact of the existence of MacNally's pension has been denied, because Mr. MacNally's name does not appear in the list of secret service money payments, which first saw the light in a former edition of this work. But it is only necessary, in reply to that denial, to state, the payments recorded in that book are, with few exceptions, of specific grants, and not pensions. It will be in vain to look in that book for any record of the reward of the secret services of the notorious Captain John Warneford Armstrong. Yet that honourable

[1] The body of this receipt is written in a very small, neat hand, in something like a lady's writing, and without any slant. That writing has been carefully compared by me and others with L. MacNally's, and considered identical with it.

gentleman enjoyed the reward of his signal services to the state up to the time of his death, an event of recent occurrence. The blood-money of the Sheares, year after year for threescore years, less one, flowed into the pockets of this veteran informer: and the people of this kingdom had the privilege, for fifty-nine years, of taxing themselves through their representatives in parliament, and of paying the annual homage of a blood-money pension to the betrayer of two young Protestant gentlemen, sons of a member of parliament, barristers of high repute, who had the misfortune to receive that arch-traitor into their confidence, to be hospitable to him, and unguarded with him in their social intercourse, to have their words and their lives laid in wait for in the midst of their family, and to be entrapped by this great villain, at the bidding of another in an exalted position, as we are informed by him, at their own fireside.

I find some notes of an old date among my papers, of letters which I discovered in books then preserved in the Tower, labelled—"Secret Correspondence of Lord Lieutenants," and some volumes of government correspondence, numbered 44, 45, 47, which indicated the mode in which the claims of the secret service gentlemen were provided for. The following entries have special reference to that subject:—

A letter dated the 11th June, 1799, from Lord Cornwallis [1] to the Lords of the Treasury, praying their lordships to grant a sum not exceeding £3,000 a year, for pensions to persons who had rendered services in the suppression of the rebellion.

A letter from Lord Cornwallis to the Lords of the Treasury, 18th October, 1800, referring to acts 38 and 39 Geo. III., providing for the remuneration of suffering loyalists and persons who rendered services to government in suppression of the rebellion, setting forth the necessity of granting money to the amount of £1,500 a year to the under-secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, for the purpose of rewarding that class of persons out of the consolidated fund, and praying that said amount should apply to pensions from 25th March, 1800.

By a clause in the Act 39 George III., chap. 65, a sum of £2,910 was allocated to the under-secretary of the Lord Lieutenant in the civil department, Dublin Castle, for the time being, in trust, for payment of secret annuities.

[There has been much fluctuation in the amount allocated to secret service payments in Ireland. By the estimates for the financial year ending 31st March, 1859, we find the amount set down to meet charges of secret service in Ireland,

[1] Lord Cornwallis was appointed Lieutenant-General and Governor of Ireland, *vice* the Earl of Camden, the 13th May, 1798.

is £5,000 sterling. This sum, it will be observed, is exclusive of the amount of pensions on the consolidated fund, paid in Ireland, which in the same year exceeded £8,000.]

In the same volume of secret correspondence of the Lord Lieutenant, above referred to, I may notice two communications, though not in relation to pensions, of some interest:—

A letter from Lord Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland, acknowledging the receipt of a copy of his Majesty's letter, directing Mr. H. Grattan's name to be struck off the list of the privy council in Ireland, which accordingly was done and notified in the "Gazette."

7th June, 1800. Lord Castlereagh to John King, Esq., in reply to his letter, stating that his Excellency does not know of any objection to Mr. O'Connell and his two sons, who have arrived at Guernsey from Bourdeaux, proceeding to England.

There were formerly books called by an outlandish name—borrowed, I presume, from the legal jargon of early times—namely, *Fiants,* among the records that were kept in Birmingham Tower. In these books of *Fiants,* sometimes also named Docket Books, over which, in earlier days, I was wont to solace my leisure hours, when I first came to the conclusion that it was better for a man in Ireland, of studious habits and of an inquisitive turn of mind—for one

who thought for himself, and judged right and wrong without reference to foreign interests, to live in the past rather than in the present,—I found many records bearing on the subject of state espionage and its rewards, the results of which are not without instruction and utility for those even who speculate on the future.

The *Fiant* Books, be it observed, are collections of legalized official documents emanating from the Irish government, conferring pensions, appointments, and preferments, granting pardons, etc., etc., etc.; each document being signed by the attorney or solicitor-general for the time being. Such records as the following, in three books alone, afford a fair sample of their quality.

"George Hepenstal,[1] a pension of £100 a year, during the life of his son, Hugh Hepenstal, from the 6th March, 1798.

Signed, JOHN TOLER."

[George Hepenstal again]—"A pension of £100 a year to George Paine during the lifetime of Hugh Hepenstal, son of George Hepenstal, from the 21st March, 1798. Dated 6th August, 1798. Signed, JOHN TOLER."

"William Cockayne and Barbara his wife, a pension of £250 for their lives from the 25th

[1] George Hepenstal was an attorney—a brother to the miscreant nick-named "The walking gallows," who was wont to hang suspected peasants over his shoulder, and whose particular services on the occasion of one of the state trials, were referred to by Toler, as the energetic acts of a zealous young officer.

March, 1798. [Date of document] 25th March, 1798. Signed, JOHN TOLER."

The services too of the friend and patron of "The Walking Gallows," it is pleasant to find are not forgotten in the "Fiant Books." We find under date 10th December, 1797, a document to the following effect:—

"Mrs. Grace Toler raised to the dignity of Baroness of Norwood of Knockallen in the county of Tipperary." Date of document the 10th December, 1797. And three years later another, dated 20th December, 1800:—"The Right Honourable John Toler created a baron." [1]

Lord Carleton. A pension of £2,700 a year. Date of document, the 12th January, 1801.

Sir Boyle Roche and wife, a pension of £300 a year. Date of document, the 15th December, 1801.

Again, some months later we find Sir Boyle Roche's name: "Sir Boyle Roche and wife, and after their decease a pension of £400 a year to Alexander Marsden, Esq., for his two daughters, Ellen and Maria Marsden, during their lives." [2]

[1] John Toler was appointed attorney-general, vice Arthur Wolfe, the 16th July, 1798, and was sworn of his Majesty's privy council the 2nd August, 1798.

[2] In the original MS. precis book of applications for places, pensions, and preferments, in my possession, of Earl Fitzwilliam,

Edward Cooke, Esq., a pension of £1,000 a year, "together with the office of keeper of the records of parliament, with all fees, dues, and allowances of said offices." January, 1802.[1]

In the books of Fiants the various measures having reference to the rebellion and the rebel leaders are indicated, which were enacted in the Irish parliament,—not certainly with the view of ending its days with honour:—

An act to empower the Lord Lieutenant or other chief governor of Ireland to apprehend and detain such persons as he or they shall suspect for conspiring against his Majesty's person and government, 37 Geo. III., ch. 14.

An act for more effectually suppressing insurrections and preventing the disturbance of the public peace, 38 Geo. III., ch. 21.

An act for indemnifying such persons as have acted since the 1st day of January, 1797, for the preservation of the public peace and suppres-

during his viceroyalty, I find an application from Sir Boyle Roche to be made a peer: "Sir Boyle Roche wishes to be made a peer, and desires to know whether Lord Westmoreland recommended him." A little later I find this jobber, who played the part of a parliamentary buffoon, having failed to obtain a peerage, installed in the office of gentleman-usher and master of the ceremonies at Dublin Castle, in 1798. Sir Boyle's condescension was ultimately shown in his acceptance of so paltry a remuneration for his services to his country as £300 a year.

[1] Mr. Secretary Cooke, Lord Camden's protegèe, and Lord Castlereagh's right-hand-man for all the dirty and discreditable work of his administration, in the Castlereagh Memoirs will be found duly eulogized.

sion of the insurrection prevailing in some parts of this kingdom, 38 Geo. III., ch. 74.

An act to remove doubts respecting the property in the service of persons transported from this country, 38 Geo. III., ch. 59.

An act for the attainder of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Cornelius Grogan, and Beauchamp Bagenal Harvey, accused of high treason, 38 Geo. III., ch. 77.

An act to prevent persons from returning to his Majesty's dominions, who have been, or shall be, transported, banished, or exiled on account of the present rebellion, and to prohibit them from passing into any country at war with his Majesty, 38 Geo. III., ch. 78.

An act to compel certain persons who have been engaged in the late rebellion which hath broken out in this kingdom, to surrender themselves and abide their trials respectively within a limited time, on pain of being attainted of high treason, 38 Geo. III., ch. 30.

In what would appear to be a draught of the Fugitive Bill, Duckett (of whom Tone makes such frequent mention in his memoirs) is described as formerly of Killarney, but now of Hamburgh, and attached to the "Mission of the French Republic" there; Edward O'Finn is described as a woollen draper of Cork; Joseph Orr, of Belfast, a brazier; John Cormick, as a feather merchant, Thomas Street; Richard M'Cormick,

a manufacturer, Francis Street, Dublin; the Rev. James Hull, formerly of Ballyvarnon, near Bangor; Anthony M'Cann, of Corderry, county Louth (the "Exile of Erin" of the song of Thomas Campbell).

In the Banishment Act, Hugh Ware, of Rathcoffey, Kildare, is described as a surveyor. Elsewhere in these books we find such entries as the following: Mrs. Eleanor Bond, widow of Oliver Bond, a grant of restoration of all the properties and chattels of her late husband, dated 8th February, 1799; William Sampson, a pardon on condition of quitting the British dominions for life, dated 28th November, 1798.—Edward Fitzgerald, of Newpark, county Wexford, and Garret Byrne, of Ballymanus, county Dublin, a pardon on condition of their quitting the kingdom for ever, dated 8th March, 1803.[1]

In re Arthur O'Connor.—A letter signed Robert Peel, dated 1st February, 1815, to J. Beckett, Esq., acknowledging communication from secretary of state intimating assent to an application for leave for the wife of A. O'Connor to visit London, and to proceed to Ireland on private business of her husband's, and concurring in Lord Sidmouth's views to permit her to

[1] Very recently I found, in the Cemetière du Nord, Montmartre, in Paris, a monument, with the following inscription:—The grave of my poor friend and brother, Gerard Byrne. He was born in Ireland, 1776, and died at Paris, 1832.—May he rest in peace. Amen.

visit Ireland, but at the same time to watch her movements there.

In re Mr. Archibald Hamilton Rowan.—The Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Hardwicke, communicates to the Secretary of State for the Home Department the strong objections that lie to any extension of mercy to so dangerous a person as this fugitive is known to be, and protests against his return to Ireland.

In re Mr. John Sweetman.—The Lord Lieutenant, through Mr. Secretary Gregory, writes to Lord Sidmouth, recommending strongly that Mr. John Sweetman should not be permitted to return, as no hope of amendment could be expected in any of the rebels of 1798. Dated the 15th May, 1819.

In re Mrs. Mary Lloyd.—In trust for her three daughters, a pension of £300 a year to Thomas O'Neil of Turnham Green, proposed to be granted the 23rd February, 1815. Signed, WHITWORTH.

In re Edward Connor and Mrs. Margaret Connor.—A pension for life of £200 a year, proposed to be granted 23rd August, 1815. Signed, WHITWORTH.

In re Myles John O'Reilly.—For the life of Miss Helena White, daughter of Thomas Jervis White, Esq., of Dublin.—A pension to Myles John O'Reilly, Esq., of £250 a year. Signed, WHITWORTH.

I have not been unmindful of Mr. MacNally's name or that of Captain John Warneford Armstrong, in the inquiries which have led to the rescue of the preceding notices from the oblivion in which the books of Fiants and the government correspondence are now buried.

In those that I have examined, there is no trace of the name of Mr. Leonard MacNally, nor of that of Captain John Warneford Armstrong. The books that I examined were not of consecutive years; nor were those of the intermediate years existing in the archives. They had been either stolen or taken especial care of, and kept separately from the other records and state papers.

I may also observe, in the books which exist, no trace is to be found of the name of that mysterious gentleman, the betrayer of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, whose initials, F. H., stand before the price of his lordship's blood, the £1,000 sterling, in the secret service money list of payments.

In the last edition of the best book yet written of the best of Irishmen—Curran and his cotemporaries—by Charles Phillipps, Esq., 1851, there is a very remarkable note appended to the account of the proceedings in parliament on the bill of attainder of Lord Edward Fitzgerald:—

"I have had the name of Lord Edward's betrayer disclosed to me. It has never yet been published, nor shall it be by me. The innocent

living ought not to suffer for the guilt of the dead. It was, however, the act of a Judas. He was, to the very last, apparently the attached friend of his victim."—*page* 88.

I would respectfully suggest to Mr. Phillipps, that "the innocent living" have suffered terribly for the guilt of the dead, in this particular instance, by the veil which has been thrown over the guilt of the real criminal in this case. Permit me to remind him, that the feelings of the children and the grandchildren of Samuel Neilson, who was so long and so unjustly suspected of being the betrayer of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, are quite as worthy of consideration as the children of the actual traitor, whose name is known to Mr. Phillipps, and is so mistakenly, as I presume to think, withheld by him from publicity. I call upon Mr. Phillipps, in the name of justice both to the living and the dead, to those who are best entitled to it at his hands, to publish the name of the betrayer of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, which he tells us has been disclosed to him, and whatever Mr. Phillipps states, I am well aware, is entitled to all reliance.

In his early career, MacNally gave a good deal of his time and attention to dramatic literature. His productions, dramatic and professional, are the following:

1. "The Apotheosis of Punch"—a satirical

masque, 8vo, 1779. 2. "The Claims of Ireland and the Resolutions of the Volunteers Vindicated"—a pamphlet, 8vo, 1782. 3. "Retaliation"—a farce, 8vo. 4. "Tristram Shandy"—a farce, 1782. 5. "Robin Hood"—a comic opera, 1784. 6. "Fashionable Levities"—a comedy, 1785. 7. "Richard Cœur de Lion"—a comic opera, 1786. 8. "Abstract of Acts Passed in Parliament," 1786. 9. "Critic upon Critic"—a dramatic medley, 1792. 10. "Cottage Festival" —an opera, 1796. 11. "The Rules of Evidence on Pleas of the Crown," 1803. 12. "The Justice of the Peace," 2 vols., large 8vo, 1809.

For two editions of the last-mentioned work MacNally received from Mr. Fitzpatrick, the bookseller, the large sum of £2,400.

MacNally wrote also four dramatic pieces, which were performed but not published: "Ruling Passion"—a comic opera, 1779; "Prelude for Covent Garden," 1782; "Coalition"—a musical farce, 1783; "April Fool"—a farce, 1786.

The "Biographia Dramatica," compiled by Baker, Reid, and Jones, ed. 1812, in its notices of the several dramas by MacNally, affords little commendation to the author as a dramatic writer. "Robin Hood," he said, "was acted at Covent Garden; but, notwithstanding the excellence of the music, there was little originality or spirit in

the piece. Robin Hood is dwindled down to a mere sententious pedant."

"Tristram Shandy" was acted several times at Covent Garden, and "kindly received," though very indifferently executed. "When acted in Dublin, it was condemned the first night." "Richard Cœur de Lion" was acted at Covent Garden, but very soon was condemned to oblivion.

"Retaliation," acted at Covent Garden. "This farce possesses considerable merit, and was favourably received. The character of Præcipe, the attorney, is highly drawn, and the dialogue is well seasoned with wit."

"The Apotheosis of Punch," acted at the Patagonian Theatre, Exeter Change. "This is an attempt to ridicule Mr. Sheridan's monody on the death of Garrick. Malignant without merit. Its author, we believe, was Mr. MacNally."

"April Fool," acted at Covent Garden, "tolerably well received."

"Coalition," acted at Covent Garden for a benefit. "The audience gave it a favourable reception."

"The Cottage Festival" was performed in Dublin in 1796.

"Critic upon Critic" was performed at Covent Garden.

"Fashionable Levities" was acted at Covent Garden "with good success."

So much for the estimate of MacNally's dramatic pieces of the "Biographia Dramatica."

Of his pamphlet, "The Claims of Ireland and the Resolutions of the Volunteers Vindicated," the "Biographia Dramatica" speaks as "a very sensible pamphlet." I have never met with a copy of it, and have some reason to say it is rare.

Of his "Justice of the Peace," his principal work, an ample account will be found in Phillipps' "Curran and his Cotemporaries." He was more qualified, we are told, for dramatic than for legal literature. This is certainly faint praise; for his dramatic talents were of a very humble order, though his faculty of invention was largely developed, and exercised rather freely, we are told, in conversation. His "Justice of the Peace" was the cause of vast numbers of actions against country magistrates; but it brought great business to country attorneys. The magistrates were constantly led by it into the commission of illegal acts, and when they complained to the author of his numerous legal errors, he was wont to assure them he would correct them in a second edition.

Phillipps' picture of his personal appearance, and the many peculiarities of his osseous structure, is graphic and amusing: "His very appearance fixed attention. Not naturally deformed, he seemed so. He seemed, at one time or other, to have had every bone in his body broken, and

lost, I believe both, but certainly one, of his thumbs—but how, he either could not or would not tell: the latter probably, as he always accounted for it,—but never was there an era richer in variations. . . . Both his legs and his arms totally different from each other; he limped like a witch; his eye and voice pierced you through like arrows, and served him well in cross-examination." [1]

If we add to the foregoing sketch a few words of his physiognomy, of which I have a very vivid recollection, Mr. Leonard MacNally will be sufficiently described:

MacNally's complexion did not contribute much to improve his peculiar cast of countenance; it was extremely sallow; it was the complexion of a man who had no red globules in his blood, but a great deal of bile commingled with it—that muddy complexion of a dirty brown hue, unctuous and unwholesome withal, which gives an appearance to the face of being always soiled, and an idea that its owner is either sickly in the flesh, uncomfortable in the spirit, or labours under that complicated form of hydrophobia manifested in a horror of soap as well as water. There was something marked in his features: they were naturally sombre and heavy, but could become suddenly vivacious, and as suddenly moody and saturnine again. The pre-

[1] "Curran and his Cotemporaries," p. 434.

dominant expression of his cold, unimpassioned countenance and dead-setting look, was that of quiet laying in wait tendencies, indicative of adroitness, sharpness, an instinctive wariness and habitual watchfulness; one was reminded by it of the hawk's beak, and the cold, gray, twinkling eye of another bird of prey, of an ominous and evil-boding character.

These outlines and similitudes are certainly not flattering; and yet there were traits in this man's character which it is very difficult to reconcile with the impression which their *tout ensemble* was calculated to leave on the mind of the observer. MacNally could be moved even to tears by a distressing spectacle; he could speak humane words, and he could do kind acts to the unfortunate. In social intercourse he could be genial, jovial, and amusing; in his family circle, and in all his relations to it, nothing could be said to his disparagement.

The once popular ballad of "The Lass of Richmond Hill" was composed by MacNally; and the lady (Miss Janson) whose attractions are celebrated in the song, became, at the commencement of his career, the wife of the author of it. This lady must have died prior to 1800.[1]

[1] In the "Dublin Magazine" for April, 1800, we find a notice of the marriage of Mr. Leonard MacNally to Miss Louisa Edgeworth, daughter of the Rev. Robert Edgeworth, of Issaid, in the county of Longford.

Mr. MacNally terminated, in 1820, a career which it had been better for his memory to have closed in the hardest struggle in his arduous but honourable profession, for a bare subsistence even, than to have died in the possession of any advantages he might have derived from services stealthily performed and secretly rewarded by the government.

In one of the best of MacNally's dramatic pieces—"Robin Hood, or Sherwood Forest"—a passage occurs in the scene where sentence is about to be pronounced on Friar Tuck, which may be very aptly applied to the author of the drama: "Your profession, sir, should have taught you principles of honour."

Roger O'Connor

Brother of Arthur O'Connor and One of the State Prisoners in 1798. From a Drawing by W. Read

MEMOIR OF ROGER O'CONNOR

THE biography of Roger O'Connor offers a study to the psychologist of no common interest. His character will be found as curious a subject for investigation as can be desired by any inquirer into mental anomalies. The constitution of Roger O'Connor's mind, like the composition of the myth in marble, the Egyptian Sphinx, is a riddle, an enigma, and a puzzle. The apparently fortuitous concourse of dissimilar elements and of conflicting molecules of an energizing kind, all moving in opposite directions, that, in the aggregate, constituted his intelligence, might have served as a model mind for the Frankenstein creation of Mrs. Shelley's powerful imagination.

Roger O'Connor's character had this singular peculiarity in it, that all its points diverged from the centre-self at such unequal distances, that there was no harmony in its composition—no keeping in the parts, or relation to any principle but—self.

This strange man's character, in short, could only be judged of by the application to it of Dr.

Wigan's theory of the duality of the mind. He was at once two distinct intellectual beings; he was generous, and liberal, and charitable, on grand occasions or on sudden impulse; he was mean and narrow-minded on small ones; and often harsh, and unfeeling, and morose, in dealing with appeals to his benevolence deliberately made to him; he was capable in public of very chivalrous, and in private of disinterested acts in favour of the oppressed and injured—of rash, reckless, and daring exploits in their behalf; and yet he was not a courageous man—either physically or morally courageous—in the true sense of the term. He was naturally morose—a man of self-concentrated thoughts—given to brood over old recollections and traditions, and to ruminate on past glories of ancient families he desired to find evidence of having once been in alliance with his own;—and yet he assumed, in his manners, air, and look, the frankness, ease, openheartedness, blandness, and amenity and dignified bearing of a high-born gentleman: such as became one lineally descended from Irish kings. He professed the most ardent patriotism, and proclaimed his readiness "to do or die" for his country; but he was incapable of an act of high daring for any great object that could be turned to a national account. He professed to love truth more than life—and yet he spent a large portion of that life forging lies, concocting

deliberate schemes of imposture, and promulgating literary forgeries with a view of hurting the principles of Christianity.

Roger O'Connor, an elder brother of the late General Arthur O'Connor, was born in 1762. He came into possession of the Connerville property of his eldest brother Daniel Connor, by purchase, at the period of the departure of the latter from Ireland on account of a prosecution carried on against him at the suit of a Mr. Gibbons. Unanimity and brotherly affection were not among the virtues which distinguished the sons of old Roger Connor of Connorville. Roger O'Connor possessed considerable talents, a lively imagination, great powers of eloquence in conversation, and a gift of persuasiveness that seemed natural to him. He received a liberal education, entered Trinity College in 1777,[1] and passed through his studies there with credit. He was called to the English bar in 1784.

Roger O'Connor's sympathies were not always on the side of the people, nor his services given to their cause. In early life he shared in all the old Tory principles of his family. He was a Delzo, an ultra-loyalist, a terrorist, a peasant-hunter. He contributed his quota of victims of justice to the gallows. He belonged to the "Muskerry

[1] In the college books where the entrance of the two brothers, Roger and Arthur, is recorded, the sirname in both entries is Conner. Roger entered in 1777, Arthur in 1779. At those dates it follows the O' had not been adopted by either of them.

Light Horse," and was very often engaged in pursuit of "Whiteboys." On one occasion he was engaged in the pursuit and capture of seven men of some notoriety in those times of agrarian disturbances, who were hanged at Macroom, and whose skulls were spiked on the top of the guard-house at Macroom, where they were allowed to remain until taken down about a dozen years ago. These were the skulls of men who were prosecuted by the celebrated betrayer of his associates, "Malachi Duggan," who was himself a leader among the insurgents of the south; but the government of that day got hold of him, and for certain well-known reasons induced him to become an informer.

In the early part of 1797 Roger O'Connor deemed it prudent to fly from Ireland and seek refuge in England. A warrant for his arrest was sent down to Cork by Lord Camden in the month of April, and at the same time his steward, one Cullinane, was arrested. On the 18th of June he returned to Ireland, and surrendered himself to government, in compliance with the terms of a proclamation of Lord Camden of the 17th of May preceding. He was allowed to proceed to Cork, but was not long in that county when he was arrested (the 14th of July) and conveyed to Dublin, and after an examination by Mr. Secretary Pelham, was set at liberty;

with the intimation, however, of his being still out on the bail which he had entered into at Mallow at the period of his former arrest.

He was no sooner liberated than he proceeded to his native county, and attended at the Cork assizes for the purpose, as he states, "of exposing as dark a conspiracy as ever was formed against the lives of twelve innocent men"; the charges against whom he had previously investigated, and had clearly ascertained that these charges were wholly unfounded. Having a full conviction of their innocence on his mind, he determined, he says, to baffle the foul conspiracy, "by giving every aid which his labour, purse, and talents could bestow (in their defence), in a fair, open, and favourable manner." He thus acted without any solicitation from any quarter, regardless of threats of informations hanging over his own head: and the result of his efforts was the triumphant acquittal of the twelve innocent men.

This proceeding of Roger O'Connor was quite in keeping with his character. He rushed into the performance of a generous action from motives in themselves praiseworthy for their disinterestedness, but at the same time in his peculiar circumstances one cannot help being struck with the rashness and indiscretion of a proceeding which was certain to bring down the vengeance

of the discomfited on himself: and such was the immediate consequence of his interference on that occasion.

In the course of a few days Roger O'Connor was arrested and lodged in jail, on an information sworn to against him at the instance of his own brother, Mr. Robert Longfield O'Connor.

The fact would hardly be credible if the statement of it rested only on the assertion of Roger O'Connor, but an affidavit sworn before the Mayor of Cork, the 28th of September, 1797, by an English officer, Lieutenant Samuel Speare, in his Majesty's 8th Regiment of Foot, can leave no reasonable doubt in the mind of any person who reads that information, that Mr. Robert Longfield O'Connor, of Fort Robert in the county of Cork, took very active steps and very undue means to get his brother Roger O'Connor hanged. Lieutenant Speare deposes that he was present in the house of Robert O'Connor when a man of the name of Cullinane was brought in by the orders of the said Robert to swear an information against Roger O'Connor; that threats, expostulations, and promises of advantages were had recourse to, to bring forward charges "so as to criminate the said Roger O'Connor"; that Cullinane declined to act on these suggestions at first, but at length made the statements that were required of him "with great eagerness and anxiety by the said Robert, to

criminate the said Roger O'Connor; and from the conduct of said Cullinane, he, the deponent, is well convinced and satisfied in his mind that the said Cullinane was influenced and intimidated by the said Robert Longfield to swear said information; and that said informations were not the result of a mind free and unbiassed and disposed to tell the genuine truth."

From the 27th of September, 1797, to the 12th of April, 1798, Roger O'Connor was the inmate of a dungeon in Cork, when at last he was put on his trial, acquitted, and discharged.

The day after his acquittal he set out for London, with the intention, he says in one letter, "of residing there and of avoiding any interference in politics," and in another of "visiting his brother Arthur, then in prison."

Roger O'Connor arrived in London the 19th of April, 1798, and the following day wrote to the Duke of Portland, notifying his arrival and expressing a desire to be permitted to see his brother Arthur, then in confinement and about to be tried at Maidstone on a charge of high treason.

The following day the Duke of Portland's correspondent was on his way to Dublin in the safe keeping of a king's messenger, Mr. Sylvester, and on the 24th he reached his destination. Within five hours of his arrival Mr. Sylvester informed him he had received another

warrant by a king's messenger, who had been despatched after him by the duke to take his person back to London forthwith. In the meantime, before the sailing of the packet that evening, O'Connor was permitted to have an interview with Mr. Secretary Cooke, who acknowledged to him (O'Connor), "that though the government did not pretend to have any charge against him, yet, from their knowledge of his power, and their opinion of an inclination (on his part) to give them opposition, they thought themselves justified in the measures now adopted." [1]

It would require a state telescope in our time, capable of magnifying objects to an enormous extent, equal to Lord Rosse's wonderful instrument, to discover that nebulous "power" of Roger O'Connor, that so intimidated the government of the British empire in 1798; that necessitated the sending forth of warrants of secretaries of state in such quick succession; that caused king's messengers to fly like feathered Mercuries from place to place; that occasioned a poor vain man, partially deranged, eternally dreaming of a fabulous descent from imaginary Scytho-Iberian Irish kings, to be whisked from place to place, from jail to jail, to be confronted

[1] Roger O'Connor's "Letters to the People of Great Britain and Ireland," Dub. 1799, p. 37.

with viceregal secretaries, examined and reëxamined by our Pelhams, Castlereaghs, and Cookes; and that enabled that self-conceited, notoriety-loving person, to worry the noble Lords Camden and Cornwallis, and the Duke of Portland, with garrulous letters and querulous memorials of terrible magniloquence, to play the part of a persecuted patriot, to solace the foolishness of his exquisite vanity, to set up *un boutique de verbiage,* and to pester the public with hyperbolical pamphlets, the rabid, pretentious, incongruous productions of a disordered brain.

Lunatics and monomaniacs are only shut up in mad-houses when they are dangerous to themselves or others. Roger O'Connor's hallucinations were by no means dangerous to the state or the sovereign in 1798; *ergo* he should not have been dignified by a suspicion of any lofty ambition animating his conduct, and dealt with as a man capable of high treason. In 1812, the perversion of his mental faculties may have extended to his moral feelings, and the power of perception of distinction between right and wrong, between certain pronouns, and the ideas of property connected with them; and even then it might have been better to have dealt with his primary disorder, than, after a consultation of lawyers on his case of five years' duration, have

placed this poor erratic gentleman on trial for a felony on the supposition of his being a sane malefactor.

A very able writer in the "Dublin and London Magazine" for February, 1828 (p. 30), who states that he is an Englishman and had been formerly employed in the revenue department in Dublin, and had known Roger O'Connor for upwards of thirty years, speaks of him in the following terms:

Roger is altogether made up of pretensions. I have lived on habits of intimacy with him for thirty years; and as he is rather a singular man, I took a delight in studying his character. That character has as yet never been accurately estimated. Putting forth claims to respect in a bold and confident manner, he found the world ready to take too much for granted; and, believing that men were made only to be gulled, he became a political quack, and ultimately fell a victim to that imposition which he practised upon others. Time and place were favourable to his pretensions: the confusion of Irish history, the national prejudices of the people, and their eagerness to grasp at delusions, were so many inducements to a cunning mind to seek the gratification of low ambition; and accordingly Roger O'Connor assumed a place in society to which he had no claim. He did this, however, with mean timidity, with a spirit which showed that he was not a daring soul, and with a littleness which would have rendered results harmless, had not a silly, stupid government forced dignity and notoriety

upon him, greatly to his own mortification and their disgrace. All he did, all he would ever have done, would be harmless in a political point of view, had not the enmity of the administration been preposterously collected upon him.

The evening of the day Roger O'Connor was brought to Dublin from London by the king's messenger, he was whisked back to London by the same custodian, where he arrived on the 29th of April. He was detained a prisoner in the house of Mr. Sylvester by the Duke of Portland's orders, and after ten or twelve days' sojourn there he was removed to Maidstone, to give evidence on the trial of his brother Arthur, and was present at it on the 21st of May, 1798, but was not examined on that trial, as his brother's counsel deemed it unnecessary to produce him as a witness. He was conveyed back to London after the trial, and on the 26th of May he was sent back to Ireland in close custody, and on his arrival in Dublin was committed to Newgate on the 2nd of June. On the 29th of July (1798) Emmet, M'Neven, and Arthur O'Connor were conducted to the Castle from their dungeons, and they returned to them in the afternoon, says Roger O'Connor, "with an account of their mission, and a written agreement entered into between Lords Clare and Castlereagh on the part of the government, and the delegates on

the part of themselves and such prisoners as should sign it."

That agreement, binding the subscribers of the Society of the United Irishmen to give detailed information of all transactions between them and foreign states, but not names of parties or descriptions of them that might implicate them, and engaging the government to allow the subscribers to emigrate to any country agreed on between themselves and the government, on condition of undertaking not to return to this country without the permission of government, nor to pass into an enemy's country, Roger O'Connor refused to sign.

Roger O'Connor shared the fate, however, of the other state prisoners in the different Dublin prisons, and the captivity of some of them in Fort George in Scotland; thus expiating by an imprisonment of several years the indiscretion of his interference at the Cork assizes in July, 1797, in behalf of twelve men under prosecution by the authorities, whom he believed to be innocent, and defended successfully.

During this imprisonment his affairs were brought to ruin, and though he was not hanged, the object of his amiable brother in procuring his confinement was partly accomplished. Shortly after his committal to jail his house and property at Connerville were delivered over to the tender mercies of a band of military caretakers of the

30th Regiment of Foot and 2nd Fencible Dragoons, and for five months the free-quarters system of military operations was in full force at Connerville, and with such signal effect that the ruined imprisoned proprietor had the satisfaction of furnishing Lord Castlereagh, December the 1st, 1798, with a bill of particulars of depredations, and damages, and wanton destruction of property of various kinds, estimated at £631 18*s.* 8*d.* Eventually, when Roger O'Connor was restored to liberty, he came out of his captivity greatly injured, if not ruined, in his circumstances.

How marvellously the British government suffered itself to be made the cat's-paw of the local interests and the small selfish objects either of vengeance or cupidity of Irish Orangeism in 1798! Because Mr. Robert Longfield O'Connor had particular reasons for desiring to hang his brother in that year, and that brother had rendered himself obnoxious to the ascendency faction of his locality by his proclamation of clap-trap sentiments of high flown patriotism, his absurd assumption of descent from Irish kings, the precious time of the administrators of the affairs of the British empire for upwards of five years was wasted on a man so powerless for mischief to any government as Mr. Roger O'Connor.

He was a more perilous man to his friends, his

family, and the circle in which he moved, than to the state.

When Arthur O'Connor was last in Ireland, he made arrangements for the disposal of all his Irish properties; and subsequently to his visit they were all sold. Those properties, when Arthur was banished, were worth about £1,200 a year. They were left in charge of Roger, and Roger had abused his trust; he sold a large portion of those properties to the then recorder of Cork, for about £10,000, which amount he had put in his pocket. Arthur went to law with his brother, and got a decree against Roger's property, under which decree the property was eventually sold.

Daniel Connor, the eldest of the brothers, became Arthur's agent on the removal of Roger from that trust. Daniel was then residing, with his eleven daughters and one son, in Bristol, in affluent circumstances, having an income of about £5,000 a year.[1]

Roger O'Connor was a propagandist free thinker. It was a habit with him to reason, after the manner of Voltaire, sneeringly and jeeringly on religious subjects. There was no time inopportune with him—no intellect too young or un-

[1] The eldest son of the above-mentioned gentleman, Mr. Daniel Connor, when the property of his uncle Roger, that had originally been his father's, was sold under a decree in chancery, purchased a portion of the estate called the Manch property, and built a house on it, where he now resides.

enlightened in his presence, for the exercise of his ridicule on religion and the application of his philosophy to all subjects bearing on it.

He would talk whole pages of Voltaire's "Philosophical Dictionary," as if he was improvising a new theology, before children—nay, he would argue with his workmen, and try to make the most sacred subjects appear ridiculous and unworthy of respect. But it is not the aged of any class who are most injured or endangered in their faith and morals by the ridicule that is thrown on religion by the frequent recurrence to this disguised but deliberate and advised mode of undermining faith. It is the young who are mortally injured by it. Infinitely less dangerous to them would be the most rabid diatribes of infidel fanaticism, delivered in the style of Paine, than the pleasant villainy in social circles of a scoffer at religious rites and tenets, and a jiber of the ministrations or ministers of religion; that kind of ridicule takes a strong hold of the minds of young people, and works infinite mischief on them.

O'Connor entertained singular opinions in regard to the rights of property, as he did on the subject of religion, and he expressed them alike undisguisedly in all companies—before young and old, rich and poor. "His conversational powers were of a high order; his manner was fascinating; his tone of voice sweet and persua-

sive; his style impressive, full of energy and apparent candour; his language eloquent, and always appropriate."

He was indulgent to his children to an extent that would seem hardly credible, if the accounts that I have received of that indulgence were not given me by one who was an eye-witness of it for many years, and on whose veracity all reliance could be placed. My informant has seen Roger O'Connor over and over come into the drawing room where the children would be assembled from his study, to which he generally retired for some time after dinner, with his hands filled with silver, "full as ever they could be with silver coin," which money he would throw down on a table, then fetch a pack of cards, and say to the children—"There is the money—there are the cards—play for it as long as it lasts."

One who spent many of his early days at Dangan and in the family of Roger O'Connor—a trust-worthy man, and most accurate in all his statements, informs me that Roger would frequently reason with his children on philosophical subjects—*more suo.* For example: on one occasion he remembered Roger discoursing largely and eloquently on the fallibility of human testimony and the impossibility of reliance on the evidence even of our own senses. He put a finger to his lower eye-lid, pressed against the eye-ball, and fixed his look on a candle that was

on the table; then bid the children do the same, and said to them: "Do you not distinctly see two candles?" and being answered in the affirmative, he added—"And yet there is in reality but one candle. The fact is, there is no reliance on human testimony of any kind."

Dangan Castle, the seat of the ancestors of the Duke of Wellington, subsequently the property of Colonel Burrowes, came into the possession of Roger O'Connor in 1803. A portion only of the purchase money originally agreed on was paid by O'Connor. The demesne and lands of Dangan consisted of several hundred acres. The unpaid part of the purchase money, by a subsequent agreement, was compounded for by a large addition to the annual rent-charge.

In 1809 the castle, which had then been six years in his possession, was destroyed by fire. The castle had been heavily insured by Roger O'Connor not long previously to the burning. He obtained £5,000 from the insurance company. The castle was very splendidly furnished; very little of it was saved.

The very day that Roger O'Connor got the money from the unfortunate insurance company, he met a Dublin merchant of the name of Orr, who was in some temporary difficulty. Roger, without bill or bond, lent the whole of the proceeds of the burning of the castle to Mr. Orr.

Roger O'Connor's extremely liberal opinions

in regard to the rights of man in territorial property extended to other possessions. He had exercised the privileges of the Phalangerian system of morals and philosophy in England at the expense of a professional gentleman—a barrister. Roger O'Connor ran away with Mrs. S., about 1805 [1] or 1806, brought the lady to Ireland, had an establishment for her near Dublin, subsequently near Dangan, and after a few years was estranged altogether from this unhappy lady. Roger O'Connor's imagination was of such marvellous activity and vivacity that ideas were perpetually starting up and passing through his mind of new discoveries of vast importance to the world—in political philosophy, or religion, or antiquarian lore; eventually all his energies were devoted to the elucidation of the darkest portions of early Irish history, and the vindication of the ancient glories of the royal lines and lineage of the kings and princes of Ireland. Those who knew him well and lived with him in familiar intercourse in his early and the better days of his career (previously to 1817), describe the powers of his imagination as unequalled, and those of a conversational kind especially, in the strongest terms of admiration. He was not only eminently dra-

[1] It will be seen by the evidence of a witness named Doyle, on a trial which took place in Trim in 1814, that Mrs. S. was then residing at Dangan Castle.

matic in conversation and felicitous in representing remarkable scenes or striking effects, of which he improvised as having an ideal presence and a real existence, but he seems to have had the faculty of protracting dreams beyond the time of sleep, and of engendering at will waking visions and illusions, and of practising imposition on the minds of others as well as on his own, not for any sordid purpose, but with a view to temporary notoriety or to some prominent position from which he could command attention to his intellectual ability and his demonstrations of it.

With such aims and objects, he claimed to have discovered a new divine revelation, a new history of Ireland, and a new science of antiquarianism in the chronicles of Eri, a new chief of Phœnician-Iberno origin in himself—"O'Connor Cier, Rige head of his race, and chief of the prostrated people of his nation,—*sousmis pas vaincus.*"

One of the latest exhibitions of the marvellously active, creative, and inventive energies of Roger O'Connor's imagination, was the discovery of a female descendent of a royal personage of remote antiquity, in Kerry, in a young girl of humble origin, who became an inmate of his home and a companion of his declining years, and to whom he bequeathed a considerable sum of money.—"Per verità, è un gran capriccio; ma in ciò segue il suo stile."

The enthusiasm with which he is said to have been wont to speak of the exalted claims of this princess of Kerry to an ancient Irish regal origin, left no doubt on the minds of many who heard him expatiate on this subject, that he had worked himself up into a firm belief in his fondly-imagined discovery.

The species of insanity under which this man laboured, with its predominant tendencies to deceive and to astound, and with this view to practise falsification, literary forgery, or fabrication of events or incidents, is compatible with a large share of cleverness, cunning, astuteness, and plausibility; and it will be found that Roger O'Connor was by no means deficient in the latter qualities. But among the many remarkable anomalies in his character and mental constitution, one of the most striking, perhaps, was the extraordinary difference between his powers of conversation and those of composition. Roger O'Connor could not, like Goldsmith, "write like an angel." He could talk, however, like one, when he was not blasphemous, and not "like poor Poll." But he wrote in the genuine Boanerges Bombastes-Furioso style, wherein the swaggering Pistol talked in the true Ercles vein. His various political pamphlets are couched in terms of extravagant hyperbole. They are all fire and tow, and flowers of rhetoric and brimstone, and a good deal of flummery, jumbled together.

Red-hot patriotism—phrase-mongering efforts to make French philosophy and Voltairianism acceptable to an Irish Christian people, solemn oaths of devotion to Ireland, vehement protestations to die on the floor of his dungeon for his principles, terrible denunciations on the foes of Erin, and innumerable vows of tender affection to his beloved countrymen—these are the trumpery clap-trap themes which make up the staple commodity and stock in trade of the political writings of Roger O'Connor.

Roger, in matters appertaining to nationality, talked as he wrote, like a man in "the superior condition" of spiritualism—in very exalted terms —extravagantly and rather incomprehensibly. Whenever you see a frothy man stand up to make a speech, and hear him speak of Hampden and Sydney, and Brutus and Scævola, and Hannibal and his children, of William Tell and Brian Boroimhe, and when he talks vehemently of perishing for his country, it is full time, if you live in a country badly ruled, to think of your neck, or your purse, or your cause, and the dangers that may equally arise from folly or perfidy. It behoves a discreet man, then, to look out for squalls in the midst of all this fine-weather sailing, and to take care that his bark is not gliding over sunken rocks, or along a track that is marked at the bottom by traces of many former shipwrecks.

A singular trial at Trim is on record, for the recovery of a very large amount of money, lost by a robbery in the demesne of Dangan, then tenanted by Mr. O'Connor, committed only one year before the famous mail-coach robbery in the neighbourhood of Dangan, when money to a large amount that had been transmitted from Dublin bankers by that mail, had been robbed, and the rifled mail bags and letters had been found in the demesne of Dangan, the seat of Mr. O'Connor. At the Meath assizes, August, 1814, the remarkable action above referred to was tried, in which Colonel Thomas Burrowes was the plaintiff, and the inhabitants of the barony of Moyfenragh, in which Dangan is situated, were defendants. The plaintiff's counsel stated that Colonel Burrowes had demised the lands of Dangan to Roger O'Connor, Esq., the present proprietor. The rent was payable half-yearly, but Mr. O'Connor having fallen into arrears, Colonel Burrowes had to resort to legal proceedings. In October, 1813, the last May rent being in arrears, the colonel's agent, Mr. Gregory, received a letter from Mr. O'Connor, "informing him that if he went to Dangan the rent would be paid"; but, as Mr. Gregory could not leave Dublin, he wrote to Humphrey Doyle of Trim (a coroner in Meath and postmaster of Trim), to proceed to Dangan, and receive the rent from Mr. O'Connor, amounting to £750. Doyle went to

Dangan on the day appointed for the payment, which payment was duly made; and he, Doyle, having left Mr. O'Connor in the house where the money was paid, he proceeded homeward, but had not left the demesne before he was attacked and robbed of the amount just received, by two men having their faces disguised; and for the loss sustained by Colonel Burrowes the present proceedings were instituted against the barony.

Humphrey Doyle (who in the plaintiff's declaration is styled the servant of the plaintiff), being examined, deposed to the facts above mentioned in the statement of the plaintiff's case. He said he went to Dangan about noon, between eleven and twelve o'clock; a man met him at the gate and directed him by his master's orders, as he said, to the place where Mr. O'Connor was waiting for him—a place in the demesne at a distance from the high road—the garden-house, where he met Mr. O'Connor. They sat down, and Mr. O'Connor desired his son Roderick, "to go for the stocking in which the bank-notes were." Roderick went, came back with the stocking with the money, and having given it to his father, the latter desired Roderick to go about his business. Mr. O'Connor then paid him the £750 in bank notes, and witness gave him the agent's receipt for the same. Deponent asked for pen and ink to mark the notes, but Mr. O'Connor said "he had no such thing." He, de-

ponent, put the money into his handkerchief and placed it in his coat pocket. He had gone only a few perches from the house where he had been paid the rent, when a person ran from behind a bush and knocked him down. This person had his face masked with a piece of cloth. Another man then rushed forward and assailed him. They tied him to a tree with cords, hands and feet. He fainted while they were tying him, and continued in a faint for fifteen minutes. When he recovered, he managed to get one of his hands in a pocket and take out a knife with which he contrived to cut the cords and to extricate himself, and when he had done so, on feeling his pocket for the money Mr. O'Connor had paid, he ascertained that it was gone, "handkerchief in which it was contained and all." His wrists were still black with the cords he was tied by. When he returned to the garden-house, he met Mrs. Smith, who gave him some water, and presently Mr. O'Connor came up, to whom he told his story, as he, deponent, then related it. Mr. O'Connor seemed much surprised at the relation, and said he believed there were robbers in the demesne; there had been two strange fellows lurking there since Monday. He offered to bring his workmen from the barn and search the neighbourhood. Witness said it was useless. Mr. O'Connor said, that on a search the money might be found hid in the thatch of some cabin

perhaps. Deponent replied, they (the robbers) are not to be found now. He then mounted his horse, being very weak, and rode back to Trim, and the same day made an affidavit of the occurrence of the robbery before the Rev. William Elliot, a magistrate of the county of Meath.

Mr. MacNally appeared for the defendants. Roger O'Connor, being sworn, said that, after he had paid the money to Doyle, he had walked with him some length, then went a contrary way, and in the course of ten minutes heard Doyle say he was robbed. He heard Doyle say the loss would not fall on him, for the money would be recovered of the county. He requested earnestly of Doyle to raise an alarm, and offered to collect his workmen, and meet him at night to make a search after the robbers. He advised Doyle that a party of dragoons should be got to assist his men in searching for the felons. Doyle said at one time, there had been but one robber, another time he said there were two; there was but one, but he imagined there might be two. He (Mr. O'Connor) examined Doyle's arms; there were no marks of a rope, nor did he see the cord was cut, nor did he hear any outcry, nor did any one else, though there were many persons in the demesne at the time. Doyle pointed out the spot where he said he had been assailed and knocked down, but there was no appearance of any struggle there; no marks of pressure on the

grass, nor of the fir-tree seeds which were in abundance there, on the great-coat of Doyle.

The jury believed the evidence given by Doyle, and consequently disbelieved the evidence given by Mr. Roger O'Connor, and accordingly they gave a verdict for the plaintiff, Colonel Burrowes, for £750.[1]

In 1817, Roger O'Connor published a pamphlet, entitled "The Seventh Conspiracy of the Oligarchy of England and their Anglo-Irish agents against the Life of O'Connor defeated."

This pamphlet is a defence of the writer against the government, by whose orders he was prosecuted on a charge of being a principal agent in a robbery of a mail-coach and the murder of the guard, on the 2nd of October, 1812, at Dangan, the coach proceeding from Dublin to Ballinasloe. The trial, at which I was present, took place at Trim, the 4th of August, 1817.

This prosecution originated in a confession made by, or extorted from, a man of the name of Owens, under sentence of death in Kilmainham jail in March, 1817. Owens was induced to make the disclosures which implicated O'Connor in a crime committed five years previously, in the expectation of obtaining a pardon. The disclosures of the condemned felon, who was to have been executed on the 29th April, 1817,

[1] See "An. Reg.," vol. vi., p. 619.

were communicated by letter to a magistrate of the county Meath, of the name of Mockler, but this magistrate had previously visited Owens, and so likewise had Alderman Darley, a police magistrate of Dublin, and Mr. Thomas Thompson, an attorney, who held the office of solicitor to the Post-Office. In Owens' first information, he charged Roger O'Connor and his son Arthur with being privy to the robbery of the mail and murder of the guard; and in a subsequent information he accused Roger O'Connor of administering to him the Carders' oath, and stated that he had committed divers outrages by his (Roger O'Connor's) orders.

About the end of April, Roger O'Connor was arrested at the house of his relative, Mr. Bernard, of Palace Anne, in the neighbourhood of Cork. His son Arthur was also arrested, but was soon after liberated in consequence of certain information, on which the arrest was grounded, being found false—namely, of his having on his person a gold watch which had been stolen with the other property taken from the mail-coach on the 2nd October, 1812. On the 28th of April, 1817, Roger O'Connor, having been conveyed to Dublin, was committed to Newgate for trial.

Seven days previously the wood-ranger of O'Connor was arrested at Dangan, conveyed to Dublin, and consigned, not to a lawful prison, but to a cell in the police department, where he

remained for nine days, as O'Connor states, all the time protesting his ignorance of the charges against his master, though constantly assailed with threats and privations to terrify him to consent to swear against his master.

The 1st of August, O'Connor was removed to the jail of Trim. On the 4th, the persons who had sworn informations against him were examined before the grand jury. Michael Owens, the convicted felon, Daniel Waring, according to O'Connor, "a fellow-robber, and murderer of Owens," and Dora Reynolds, who had been an occasional servant at Dangan Castle from 1803, when O'Connor first came to reside in Dangan, to 1810, when she became an indoor servant, and lived in the house till 1813, when an attachment was formed between her and the wood-ranger Martin M'Keon, and the result was her discharge, and a little later the honours of paternity were conferred upon M'Keon, Dora having sworn before Mr. Mockler that M'Keon was the father of her child. Dora's testimony, however, was defeated by herself, for the legal agents of the prisoner had got her to unswear for the accused all she had previously sworn for the prosecutors.

Owens, the condemned robber and murderer, who turned approver, swore in his informations that Roger O'Connor, on the 1st January, 1812, swore him by a Carder's oath, "Not to mind the

moans and groans of Orangemen, but to wade knee-deep in their blood," and to rob arms for the object of robbery, plundering mail-coaches, etc., etc.

Roger O'Connor, referring to the proceedings against him at Trim, in his narrative of the seventh conspiracy of the oligarchy of England against the life of O'Connor, makes some observations particularly of the highly ornate, flowery style of his composition, one peculiarly suited to the climate and the academic groves and bowers and gardens of the literati of the Celestial Empire.

The bills of indictment being found under the foregoing circumstances, I was conducted to the court of assize of Trim on such a charge.

The sun had peered out early with uncommon lustre, smiling upon all, save the wan captive,[1] long denied the glory of his presence—what time my foot had reached a felon's step—rolling himself within his densest folds, covering his head in sable mantling, he retired from mortal view, indignant; troubled Tara would have broken from his old foundation to hide himself in ocean's deepest cave; but Tara had no fears for his own son—the glory of the race of Ir encircled his aged crown—the favourite race of Eri, that would

[1] "The wan captive," as he appeared to me on his trial at Trim, the 4th of August, 1817 (forty years ago), was a hale, hearty, joyous, good-humoured, kindly-looking, broad-faced, honest-minded seeming person—a man in the full vigour of life, about fifty years of age apparently.

have saved unhappy Ireland, if to be saved—a race on whose brow shame has ever been ashamed to sit. 'Tis true, Tara bides in grief and sadness, lamenting her good and joyful days;—all may be well again![1]

Arraigned for an act that blisters the tongue to name—that makes the blood of every true Irishman overflow its continent at the bare thought, I repelled the blasphemous charge with indignation—the people received my voice full upon their overcharged hearts—whence echoed back the sound, till lost in murmurs deep and low—meaning much more than met the ear.

This ceremony being over, I was reconducted to my prison. Tuesday, the 5th of August, now arrived. I walked to the court, attended by my children, accompanied by Sir Francis Burdett and a host of friends, followed by the prayers of the people, who well knew the meaning of the passing pageant. I smiled at the impotent malignity of tyrants, their agents, and instruments; I laughed to scorn all those leagued against my honour. The judge indulged me with the permis-

[1] "The favourite race of Eri," the poor peasantry, for instance, of the district that included the Connerville estate, when it was the property of old Roger Conner, "the prudent, cunning tithe-proctor," who scraped together so much money in the way of business, when young Master Roger used to go out with the Muskerry Light Horse to scour the country in search of Whiteboys, it is to be feared would feel rather bewildered at this apostrophe, and no doubt would greatly desire to know what it was all about, but would go away, of course, perfectly satisfied when Roger would put on one of his sublime looks, square his chest after heaving a deep sigh, and would say to the multitude "of the race of Eri," in solemn accents: "Hoc illis dico, qui me non intelligunt."—"I address my discourse to those who have no understanding of it."

sion to sit outside the common dock, as well for the accommodation of Sir Francis Burdett, who signified his wish to sit by me, as to facilitate my communication with my solicitors and counsel. I felt obliged to the judge, but would not have accepted any favour, had not Sir Francis Burdett insisted on it.

So far for Mr. Roger O'Connor's statement. I have a lively recollection of Mr. Roger O'Connor's appearance walking into court to be tried for his life on a charge of highway robbery and murder, leaning on the arm of Sir Francis Burdett.[1] I have also a very lively recollection of the English baronet, on being sworn to give true and faithful evidence on that trial, saying with great solemnity and with marked emphasis: "When I heard of the charge brought against my friend Mr. O'Connor, I was ready to sink into the earth."

From the time these words were spoken it was

[1] At the period of the trial O'Connor owed Sir Francis Burdett the sum of £1,000, borrowed from the latter in various sums on several occasions. I have been informed by a barrister, whose father had been the agent of O'Connor at the time of this trial, that the mail coach was not robbed near Dangan in 1813 for money, but for letters which compromised the patron of Mr. O'Connor, and might have been produced against him in evidence had certain legal proceedings been continued which had been originated by a certain lord whose domestic relations were not felicitous. I know not what degree of credit is to be given to this statement, but if the coach that was robbed had been proceeding from Galway to Dublin instead of from Dublin to Galway, there might be some more feasibility on the face of it.

quite evident an impression was made on the minds of the jury that left nothing to be feared for the life of Mr. O'Connor.

There was a verdict of acquittal; great cheering in court; clasping of hands on the part of the prisoner and his friend and deliverer, Sir Francis Burdett.

Now let us hear Mr. Roger O'Connor on the subject of his acquittal:—

People of England, receive from me this sincere tribute of respect and gratitude. When I was heretofore most wantonly assailed by corrupt hirelings of power, I laid before you a true state of the case, which slanderous workers of types had wilfully misrepresented, and unassumingly, I hope, requested of you to be judges between your rulers and me—me, who had been subjected to a seven years' dreadful persecution, contrary to law; and them, who fled for refuge to their own creatures for a bill of indemnity, for having transgressed those very laws by which they most hypocritically affected to rule. You weighed the merits, you dispassionately considered the charges preferred against me, and my answer; I had the happiness of receiving the assurance of your approbation of my conduct, of your having fixed the seal of your reprobation upon your guilty yet indemnified oligarchy. In this testimonial of your favourable opinion, I received much more than an equivalent for my sufferings and privation. Since that period, now seven years, I have felt many a lash of the scorpion whip of power, in consequence of the sentence you then passed; so

galling was it to the many-handed tyrants—till, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, our persevering enemies have just now gone the desperate length of attempting to destroy my character, in which they have been defeated, to their everlasting shame and confusion —to the joy and triumph of the people.

People of Scotland, for the most part of my own tribe, I pray you to accept the tender of my thanks for the kind and flattering sentiments you express for me; I acknowledge with pride your claim of kindred—assuredly we are brothers.

People of Eri, my heart and soul are full of you!

Hold!—more thanks are yet due. Conspirators, I thank you. I owe you the same obligation as the man owed to him who, aiming at his life, pierced an abscess, which made him whole and sound again; but "I will trust you, as I would adders fanged."

Mr. Justice Daly and gentlemen of the jury, I hope conspiracy has now received from your hands a mortal wound, and that the hideous monster for ever is disabled from carrying even a momentary victory over personal liberty, from putting life in jeopardy, or filching away a man's reputation—that jewel above all price. People, adieu! Whilst I live, I will be your servant,

O'CONNOR.

Dangan Castle, September 5, 1817.

The ill-judging friends, or the ill-disposed friends, of Roger O'Connor, forced on him a prosecution for perjury against Daniel Waring, one of the approvers brought forward at Trim

against him. The prosecution broke down, and the prisoner was acquitted on grounds which were very differently treated in Wales by one of the English puisne judges, in the year 1857.

Mr. O'Connor's testimony was impeached, and successfully so, after having been sworn and examined touching his belief in the Scriptures and the divine character of the Founder of Christianity, when he declared he believed only in the Old Scriptures as historical records, and in the New Testament as having relation especially to a great and good man, a reformer of abuses, a messenger of the Most High, whose great zeal had caused him to become the dupe of his own enthusiasm.

Such were the religious opinions of Roger O'Connor—one of the men who, if the United Irishmen had prevailed, would have had to take a leading part in the government of a Christian people of various churches, believing firmly in the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Gospel.

Roger O'Connor, I was informed by his brother Arthur, was the proprietor of a paper called "The Harp of Erin," published in Cork, of a seditious character, "and that paper was almost exclusively filled by him, Roger."

Windele, in his "Historical Descriptive Notices of the City of Cork and its Vicinity"—article, Kilcrea, p. 264—referring to Roger

O'Connor's opinions on religious subjects and writings, says:

In religion he disbelieved the Christian revelation. He had been educated as a Protestant, lived an unbeliever, and died a Roman Catholic. He published several works: the principal was his "Chronicles of Eri," an historical fiction, which he would fain palm upon us as authentic and of authority. Compared with this, he assures us that all other histories are bardic compilations—the contemptible poetry of history. Another publication of his was "Captain Rock's Letter to the King"—a work intended to decry the modern nobility of Ireland, and containing some curious notices and anecdotes. For the last two or three years of his life he lived in retirement near the Ovens, and previously to his death, made it a request to be buried in the tomb of the M'Carthys at Kilcrea.

A gentleman, however, connected with Roger O'Connor, residing in Cork, in reply to inquiries of mine, says:

O'Connor died professing the same natural religion which he believed in during his life. A near neighbour of his, Mr. Gibbons, a justice of the peace, states that he was so far from conforming to the Roman Catholic religion, that he never heard it even reported; and observes, that, such as his belief was, he was conscientious in the maintenance of it; and moreover, that the late James Roach (the eminent literary man and historical antiquarian) stated he knew O'Connor at the time of his death, and, though not present at his decease, was convinced that the statement of O'Con-

nor's conforming to the Catholic religion was incorrect. O'Connor's infidel opinions (continues my informant) are fully displayed in "The Chronicles of Eri."

But there is no foundation whatever for the charge made against him of attempting a literary fraud. I have looked over "The Chronicles of Eri," and I do not find that they differ (in plan) from "The Persian Letters" and numerous other productions of that stamp, the feigned historical form being intended to attract the attention of the reader; and perhaps the object of the writer was to depict an imaginary religious and social state or government, and to demonstrate or develop his own peculiar views on the origin of the Celtic race. There is none of the circumstantiality in this production which a literary fraud required; no account of the original is given, or of the author; no date, no place recorded (in relation to the discovery of ancient documents); there is not the slightest attempt at historic truth, or antiquarian research, or consistency (in the narration of recorded facts).

I felt bound to lay the preceding statement before my readers, but I feel bound also to state, the result of my examination of "The Chronicles of Eri," is a conviction that this work deserves, beyond all doubt, the designation of a literary fraud.

The first volume of the extraordinary work referred to by Windele, I find, contains 494, the second volume 509, pages of matter densely

printed in royal 8vo. The work is entitled "Chronicles of Eri, being the History of the Irish People, translated from the Original Manuscripts in the Phœnician Dialect of the Scythian Language." By O'Connor. In 2 vols. London, 1822. A portrait of the author is prefixed to the first volume, representing him holding a crown in his right hand, and a roll, with characters purporting to be in the Phœnician dialect of the Scythian language, in his left. The work is dedicated to Sir Francis Burdett. In the preface the author informs his reader: "This is the fourth effort I have made to present to the world a faithful history of my country." The first effort was made, he states, while immured in a prison in Dublin in 1798 and 1799, "charged by the oligarchy of England with the foul crime of treason, because he would not disgrace his name by the acceptance of an earldom and a pension to be paid by the people. He was courted to desert; and because he resisted their every art to become a traitor to his beloved Eri, he employed his time in writing a history of that ill-fated land, which he had brought down to a very late period, when an armed force of Buckinghamshire militiamen entered his prison, and all the result of his labours, with such ancient manuscripts as he then had with him, were outrageously taken away, and had never since been recovered."

The second effort was made during his captivity in Fort George, after his removal from his prison in Dublin, in March, 1803, because he would not consent to become a party to a compromise with government. During that captivity he occupied himself in writing the history of his country, which he had brought down to the commencement of 1801, when he was removed from Fort George, in Scotland, to London, in custody of a king's messenger, and on his journey to England, at the consent of his wife, from prudential motives, consented to her request to have the fruits of his labour in Fort George committed to the flames.

The third effort was made shortly after his liberation, on his return to Ireland in 1803, when, to quote his words, "having availed myself of the earliest opportunity of reclaiming from the bowels of the earth the most secret manuscripts of the history of Eri, I recommenced my pursuit, and brought down my work to the memorable era of 1315, when it and almost all my most valuable effects, to a great amount, perished in the flames which consumed all but the bare walls of the castle of Dangan, in the year 1809."

The fourth effort, final and successful, "to write an authentic history of Innisfail, the Isle of Destiny," when, he states, Sir Francis Burdett having arrived in Ireland in 1817 (on the

occasion of the alleged mail-coach robbery trial at Trim), he promised him (Sir Francis) to present to him, at as early a day as possible, a history of Ireland, on the truth of which he could rely, which promise he now fulfilled. "This history," he adds, "is a literal translation from the Phœnician dialect of the Scythian language of the most ancient manuscripts, which have, fortunately for the world, been preserved through so many ages, chances, and vicissitudes." [1] Then commence the long-lost "Chronicles of Eri" with the writings of Eolus, chief of Gael-ag from the year 1368 to 1365 before Christ, giving the traditionary history of the Scythians, the ancestors of the people of Eri or Ireland, from the earliest point of time to his own days, in language, style, division of the text into verses, and allusions to great events recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, evidently intended to paraphrase and imitate the sacred writings of the Old Testament. And throughout the work the same unmistakable attempt to deceive and to impose on the understanding of his readers pervades the entire production; and to me in that attempt there exists evidence of that species of insanity which I have above referred to.

With respect to the controverted statement of Roger O'Connor having conformed to the Roman Catholic religion a short time previously to

[1] "Chronicles of Eri," vol. i., pref. p. 8.

his decease, I have taken a good deal of trouble to ascertain the real facts of the case from the only living person who could speak on that subject from his own knowledge, having lived on terms of close intimacy with O'Connor during the latter years of his life, and having been in attendance on him in his last moments. The person I allude to is the Rev. Daniel Crowley, formerly parish priest of the Ovens, but no longer in the exercise of his clerical functions, having been removed from his clerical office and placed under ecclesiastical censures for the publication of a pamphlet entitled "Ecclesiastical Finance," etc. After a good deal of inquiry, I learned that Mr. Crowley, now in his seventy-eighth year, was residing in Dublin. I called on that gentleman, and requested him to inform me of the particulars of Mr. Roger O'Connor's alleged change of religious sentiments at the period above referred to. Father Crowley said—He was with Roger O'Connor when he died, and administered the sacrament of extreme unction to him. He was sent for by Miss ——, Roger O'Connor's protegèe, and housekeeper, whom he called the Princess of Kerry, and spoke of as descendent of the most ancient Irish kings. Roger O'Connor did not send for him (Father Crowley), nor was he capable during his last illness of doing so. He entertained, unfortunately, infidel opinions. He had no belief in

Christian revelation. His last years were spent in his (Father Crowley's) parish. He knew Roger O'Connor well; and at his death, he (Father Crowley) took and still held on lease, the house and about eleven acres of land, which had been in the possession of Roger. None of the children of Roger O'Connor were with the latter at the time of his death or during his illness; they were all living away from him. His last illness was a sudden apoplectic seizure, from which he never rallied from the time he was struck down by it. He was attended to the grave by the Catholic clergy of the parish.

This statement of Father Crowley I believe to be true in every particular; it needs no comment.

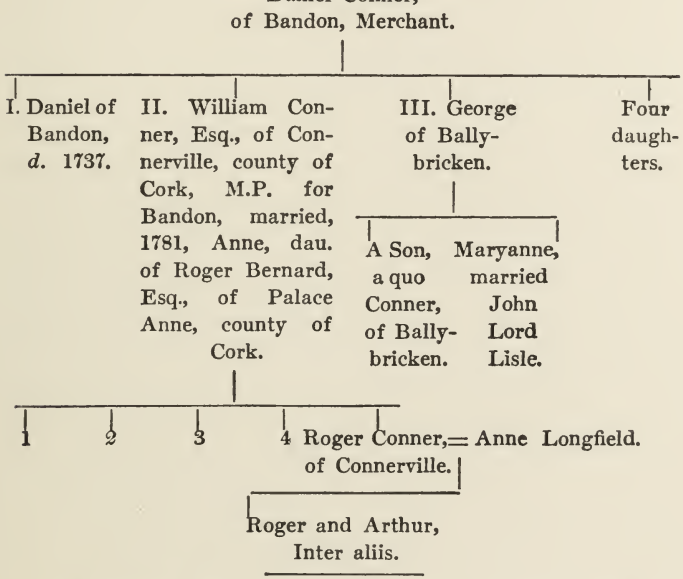
Roger O'Connor terminated the strange and eventful history of his career near Kilcrea in the county of Cork, in the parish of the Ovens, the 27th January, 1834. His remains were interred by his express desire in the ancient vault of the M'Carthys (a family with which the O'Connors were unconnected), in the old abbey of Kilcrea, about ten miles from Cork.

Roger's children by his first marriage with Miss Louisa Strachan, daughter of Colonel Strachan, were Louise and Roderick. Louise died without issue; Roderick, who went to Van Diemen's Land about 1823, purchased land extensively there, and is still living. By the sec-

ond marriage of Roger with Miss Wilhelmina Bowen, he had issue: 1. Wilhelmina, who married a Mr. Smithwick, of the county of Limerick, still living, and now residing near Bandon; 2. William, subsequently called Francis Burdett O'Connor, who went to South America with William Aylmer, of Painstown, and distinguished himself very greatly in the service of the South American patriots, became a general in Bolivia, married advantageously, and settled in that country; 3. a son named Arthur, who was taken up in 1817 on the same charge of mail-coach robbery as his father, but was liberated after a short imprisonment; he gave himself up to fox-hunting, and died in the enjoyment of that favourite pursuit many years ago; 4. a daughter named Mary, who never married, and is still living in London; 5. Harriet, who never married, and is still living in London; 6. a son, Edward Bowen O'Connor, whose name his father changed for Fergus in early life: Fergus's political career as a radical reformer and socialist in England, is too well known to need observation; he was returned to parliament for Cork in 1832, and for Nottingham in 1847; he died insane without issue, in 1856; 7. a son named George, who died about 1830, without issue.[1]

[1] For the following outline of a Genealogical Table showing the origin of the family of Conner, of Connerville, county of Cork, I am indebted to Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King-at-Arms:—

Roger O'Connor's second marriage must have taken place some years before 1798. His wife by this marriage was a most amiable and excellent woman—too good for the strange, capricious, and unprincipled man she was allied with; she died at Dangan in the latter end of 1808 or beginning of 1809. Her death was hastened by the terror she experienced on the occasion of the burning of the castle of Dangan at that period.[1]



[1] The following two letters of Sir Francis Burdett to Mr. Bennett, one of the leading counsel of Mr. Roger O'Connor on the occasion of his trial at Trim, in 1817, throw some light on the writer's opinions respecting the prosecution and the prosecuted person: for these letters I am indebted to the son of Counsellor Bennett.

From Sir Francis Burdett, Baronet, to R. N. Bennett, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, 23 Harcourt Street, Dublin.

Dangan, August 8, 1817.

My dear Sir,

There is no man's house in Ireland I shall enter with more satisfaction than your's. I will send you a line the day before I set out, and I think it will be about the middle of next week, Wednesday possibly—I mean probably. Many thanks for the horse, for I shall only keep one, and I have a servant who will look after him. As to the meeting about reform, it would be very mischievous unless it was *very respectably* attended—I do not mean by that *only numerously.*

O'Connor is far from well, although much better than he was, and begs me to remember him to you and to excuse his not writing.

Every day since my arrival one gentleman or another has pressed me so hard to pay him a visit, that I have not yet had any time to speak to O'Connor.

I am just now got to Dangan from Mr. O'Ryley's, and going out again with Roderick, for O'Connor is not well enough, to Mr. Winter, to meet Mr. Tighe, who told me yesterday that the jury were unanimous in opinion that there never ought to have been any trial at all, and that if all the evidence produced on the trial had been laid before the lawyers on the part of the prosecution as it ought, they never would have sanctioned it. I met him on his way with Mr. Winter's son to call on O'Connor at Dangan. This appears to me important: that O'Connor's whole jury, and one so respectable, should be ready to give such testimony in case of any action being brought, etc.

I shall be much delighted to see the Allan Bog and everything in Ireland except the Jesuits' Coll—.

Yours, Sir, very sincerely and much obliged,

Signed, F. Burdett.

From Sir Francis Burdett, Baronet, to R. N. Bennett, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.

Kilfain, November 16, 1817.

Dear Sir,

I have been so long detained by the hospitality and agreeable society of Kilkenny that I began to despair of being able to force myself away. I have however determined upon leaving

Mr. Power's this night when the party shall break up to retire to bed. I shall therefore sleep at Kilkenny town this night, and at Mr. Johnstone's, the late Judge's, to-morrow, Monday; the next day I shall call at Newbury to leave your horse, and then go to O'Connor, who will be undoing as fast as anything can be done for him. It was always against my opinion, as you will remember, at all prosecuting those ruffians; my opinion was, higher game should have been flown at or none. However, in consequence of your letter, he having sworn the information too, I wrote in the spirit of what you wrote to me, but then nobody could have foreseen such want of common preparation. I must pay another visit to the Duke of Leinster and Lord Cloncurry, but any letter directed to Dangan will be forwarded. Adieu, in haste.

Yours,
Signed, F. Burdett.

MEMOIR OF SAMUEL NEILSON

CHAPTER I

EARLY CAREER

THE character of Samuel Neilson has met with more than the ordinary share of injustice which has befallen the memories of the United Irishmen. Two brief sketches of his life have appeared; one was published by Bernard Dornin in New York, in 1804, bearing the signature of "Hibernicus," and it is evidently written by one who had been intimately acquainted with him.[1] The other sketch appeared in "The Dublin Morning Register," 29th November, 1831—the writer of which is styled the friend of Neilson by the editor; and many of the accurate details in that paper, I believe, could only have been furnished by the early friend of Neilson, Mr. Charles Teeling. I am indebted to the family of Samuel Neilson for the materials which have enabled me to lay this memoir before

[1] The above-named sketch of the life of Samuel Neilson appeared in "The Irish Magazine" for September, 1811, as an original article, and it has been cited in other publications as having been written by Walter Cox, the editor of that magazine.

the public; and I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to pay the humble tribute of my respect to the filial affection, and tender regard for the memory of a beloved father, on the part of those by whom I have been entrusted with these documents.

Samuel Neilson was born in September, 1761, at Ballyroney, in the county of Down, of which place, his father, Alexander Neilson, was a dissenting minister. He was partly educated by his father, and partly at a school in the neighbouring town. He received a liberal education, made some proficiency in mathematical attainments, and displayed in his early years an eager desire for knowledge. His natural disposition and character, even in boyhood, were calculated to give him a superiority among his companions; he was bold, manly, and generous. In determining his future pursuits in life, the selection was made less with regard to the bent of his inclinations than to the views of family convenience. He was put to business about sixteen, and served his apprenticeship to his elder brother, John Neilson, a woollen-draper in Belfast. In September, 1785, he married a daughter of William Bryson, a highly respectable and wealthy merchant of that town. Shortly after his marriage he commenced business, and his establishment, the "Irish Woollen Warehouse," [1]

[1] Situated on part of the ground now occupied by the Commercial Buildings.

by his assiduity and mercantile ability, became the most extensive and respectable house in that line in Belfast. Up to the year 1792, his affairs continued to increase in prosperity, and at that period he was possessed of a good deal of property, estimated by his family at about £8,000. Like most of the other leaders of the United Irishmen, he commenced his political career in the ranks of the Volunteers. At the altar of national independence the first glow of liberty was kindled in his breast; and long after the shrine itself was laid in the dust the flame of patriotism continued to animate his being, and neither sickness nor suffering, in imprisonment or in exile, extinguished it in the breast of Neilson.

The precursor of the Society of the United Irishmen was one called the Northern Whig Club, the establishment of which was suggested by Lord Charlemont, in a letter addressed to Dr. Haliday, dated 20th of February, 1790, in which he states, "that an institution of this kind, by holding out a congregation to the true believers of Belfast, would be a means of fixing, and even recalling many who might otherwise wander from the faith."

The first meeting was held on the 16th of March, and a declaration was drawn up and signed by all its members, in which reform and parliamentary independence were put forth as

the two grand objects of the club—but not one word was said on the subject of Catholic Emancipation; on the contrary a paragraph was introduced meant to be hostile to that measure, in which the sneaking spirit of bigotry, fearful of betraying its own views, is to be discovered under such cautious phraseology as the following: "That no person ought to suffer civil hardships for his religious persuasion, unless the tenets of his religion lead him to endeavour at the subversion of the state."

It is to be borne in mind that both Lord Charlemont and Dr. Haliday were then inimical to Catholic Emancipation, on the grounds set forth in the preceding paragraph.

The first general meeting of the Northern Whig Club terminated in a banquet, at which—if the toasts drunk with rapturous applause afford any test by which we can judge of the political sentiments of the loyal Whig club—it would seem that not a few of the honourable members were destined to accomplish the rhetorical feat, on another occasion, which was so early performed by one of them—namely, of turning their backs on their own opinions. Amongst the toasts we find the following: "The Prince of Wales," followed by "The glorious and immortal memory;" "The rights of the people;" "The cause for which Hampden died in the field, and Sydney on the scaffold;" "May the example of

one revolution prevent the necessity of another;" "A speedy and happy establishment of Gallic liberty." [1]

On the 16th of April, at another meeting of the Northern Whig Club, Gawin Hamilton, Esq., in the chair; Dr. Haliday secretary, an address to the electors of Ireland was put forth, beginning with the following words, "The third estate of parliament no longer exists—the power of regenerating it rests with you," and calling on the electors to demand a solemn pledge from every candidate, both in and out of parliament, to promote the success of a measure for reform, and to prevent in detail the evils arising from parliamentary corruption and the exercise of the prerogative in an arbitrary manner, and with danger to the person of the subject. This pledge was unanimously adopted, as well as the other measures recommended, and signed by order of the meeting—Gawin Hamilton, President; Dr. Haliday, Secretary. Then follows a list of the original subscribers, members of the Northern Whig Club, sixty in number, amongst which are found the following:

Earl of Charlemont,	Lord de Clifford,
Hon. Robert Stewart (Lord Castlereagh),	Earl of Moira,
	Right Hon. H. L. Rowley,

[1] "The History of Belfast," Berwick, p. 337.

Hon. H. Rowley (Lord Longford),
Right Hon. J. O'Neil (Lord O'Neil),
Richard Griffith,
Savage Hall,
E. Jones Agnew,
William Brownlow,
James Stuart,
Henry Joy,
Francis Dobbs,
William Sharman,
Dr. Haliday,
Gawin Hamilton,
Hamilton Rowan,
Francis Dobbs,
William Todd Jones,
William Sinclaire,
James White,
S. M. Tier,
Robert Thompson,
Elfred Pottinger,
Etc., etc.

The proceedings of this day's meeting terminated, as the former, with an entertainment, when "The glorious and immortal memory" was followed by "Our sovereign lord—the people." [1]

This was the perfection of effrontery. Their sovereign lord, the people, was, in fact, the Protestant and Presbyterian element in it, which formed a sixth part of the population; but the Roman Catholic proportion of it they were not only content to deprive of their civil rights, but willing to gall their spirit by recalling names associated with events, the recollection of which could not be otherwise than painful to them.

The Whig club, it is hardly necessary to say, died of inanition; and, as its principles had nothing in common with the people, and its

[1] "The History of Belfast."

members had no public sympathies except for persons who were of their own religion, their club deserved no popular support, and it sunk into insignificance a few years after its formation.

The political pursuits on which Neilson entered in 1791 caused his affairs to be neglected, and his business to be eventually abandoned. From the period of his connection with "The Northern Star," all his energies appear to have been devoted to the interests of the society of which that paper was the organ. In the summer of 1791, the idea of forming a society similar to that subsequently established under the name of the Club of the United Irishmen was suggested by Samuel Neilson to Henry Joy M'Cracken and Thomas Russell. The Volunteer Association was then fast sinking into insignificance; its leading members seemed only anxious to obtain for it from government the privilege of a decent burial of its glories. The causes which had led to its decline were sufficiently obvious to Neilson and his associates; it was evident to them that there could be no hope for the successful maintenance of the principles of the Volunteers but in the cordial union of the people of Ireland of all religious persuasions. Neilson formed the idea of establishing a political club that would revive the great principles of the expiring association—namely, of reform

and parliamentary independence. The matter was talked over with Henry Joy M'Cracken, Russell, and one or two other persons, at a tavern. Neilson, on this occasion, said, "Our efforts for reform hitherto have been ineffectual, and they deserve to be so, for they have been selfish and unjust, as not including the rights of the Catholics in the claims we put forward for ourselves." The evening of that day, when the subject was first mooted, M'Cracken, on his return home, mentioned the circumstance to a member of his family, who, in reference to the proposed club, expressed some doubts of Roman Catholics being sufficiently enlightened to cooperate with them, or to be trusted by their party. M'Cracken, with great earnestness, endeavoured to show the groundlessness of the prejudices that were entertained against the Catholics. His opinions were shared by one of his sisters (to whom I am indebted for these particulars), a person even then in advance of public opinion on the subject in question, and whose noble sentiments on most matters were above the level of those of ordinary minds. Her brother, she informs me, asked the person who had expressed apprehensions of Roman Catholics being admitted into their club, if there was not a poor, old, blind woman under their roof, who had spent the best part of her life in their family, and, although she was a Roman Catholic, was

there anything in this world they would not trust to her fidelity? and if they put their whole confidence in her because they happened to be acquainted with her, why should they think so ill of those of the same creed whom they did not know? These details, trivial as they may seem, are calculated to throw some light on the original views and principles of those persons who were the founders of the Northern Society of United Irishmen.

It ought not to be forgotten that the recognition of the great principle of religious liberty was the prominent feature of the plan of the proposed society. That principle had indeed been advocated by Neilson from the beginning of his political career, and to the close of it he was a consistent advocate of immediate and unconditional emancipation. Neither, in justice to the memory of the founders of this society, ought it to be forgotten that to them we owe the extraordinary revolution in public opinion with respect to the Catholic claims which took place in 1792, and the concessions granted the year following in consequence of the impulse given to that question, the awakening of the dormant energies of the Roman Catholic leaders, and the rescuing of their cause from "the cold, dull shade" of the Catholic aristocracy.

The Dungannon convention of 1793, which was said to represent 1,250,000 men, emanated

from a public meeting held in Belfast, on the 26th of December, 1792, convened by the popular party and the principal leaders of the United Irishmen, at which meeting Neilson acted as secretary, Mr. Charles Ranken presided as chairman, and the business was opened by Mr. Robert Thompson.

A declaration of the political sentiments of the Society of United Irishmen was put forth at this meeting, wherein they declare that "a radical reform in the representation of the people has long been, and still is, the great object to which all our wishes, all our endeavours tend—the object which we have pursued, and which we shall never cease to pursue until it is attained; and to attain it we shall think no sacrifice too much—no risk too great; and no reform can ever be adequate or useful, satisfactory or just, unless all Irishmen, of every description, shall be equally and fairly represented."

The appointment of a committee of twenty-one was then determined on to carry into effect the preparatory arrangements for a committee, for the purpose of naming delegates and taking measures for calling together a convention, and for "corresponding with their fellow-citizens in all parts of the country."

The committee appointed consisted of the following gentlemen:

C. Ranken,
Robert Thompson,
John Homes,
James Homes,
Dr. White,
James Ferguson,
William Sinclaire,
Samuel Neilson,
Rev. P. Vance,
Rev. S. Kelburne,
H. Montgomery,
H. Haslitt,
R. Getty,
S. M'Tier,
William Tennent,
Robert Sims,
Dr. M'Donnell,
G. Joy,
H. Crawford,
T. Brown,
John Boyle.

On the 15th of February, 1793, the delegates from the several northern counties assembled at Dungannon (William Sharman in the chair; Henry Joy and William Armstrong, secretaries), being fully acquainted with the sentiments of their particular districts. They declared the sense of the people in a series of resolutions, expressive of "their attachment to the form and original principles of the British constitution;" "of their disapproval of republican forms of government as applied to this kingdom, and of principles which have a tendency to dissolve all government and destroy distinctions in society;" "of the necessity of a complete parliamentary reform, as essential to the peace, liberty, and happiness of the people," and "of immediate and entire emancipation of the Roman Catholics, as a measure indispensably necessary to the safety of the country."

They finished their proceedings by appointing a committee for the purpose chiefly of concerting proper means for calling a national convention at a future day, should circumstances render it unavoidably necessary. The committee consisted of the following delegates:

T. M. Jones,
James A. Farrell,
A. M'Manus,
William Sinclaire,
Hugh Boyd,
J. Watt,
J. Ball,
J. Allen,
J. Cockran,
S. Ross,
Gawin Hamilton,
Alexander Stewart,
Joseph Pollock,
William S. Dickson,
J. Crawford,
J. Church,
H. Lyle,
D. Eccles,
Dr. Reynolds,
William Ross,
William Stitt,
H. Falkner,
William Finlay,
J. Thompson,
J. Atchison,
J. Scott.[1]

At a public meeting held in Belfast on the 19th of January, 1793, an address to his majesty was determined on, signed by order of the meeting, and in their name, by Charles Ranken, Chairman, and Samuel Neilson, Secretary, expressive of their gratitude for his majesty's "recommendation of the situation of the Catholic brethren and fellow-subjects to the attention of the Irish parliament;" and conveying the

[1] "The History of Belfast," p. 408.

warmest sentiments of loyalty and attachment to his majesty's person.[1]

At another meeting held in Belfast on the 28th of January, 1792, Neilson took an active part. In reply to an opinion expressed by Mr. Henry Joy, "that neither the Protestant mind was sufficiently prepared to grant, nor the Catholic one universally prepared to receive a plenary and immediate exercise of every right which members of a state can possibly possess," Neilson expressed his "astonishment at hearing that or any part of the address called a Catholic question!" To his understanding, "it no more presented a Roman Catholic question than a Church question, a Presbyterian, a Quaker, an Anabaptist, or a mountain question. The true question was—whether Irishmen should be free."

The idea of the Dungannon Volunteers Convention of 1783 was again thus acted on in 1793, when the convention of reformers assembled there the 15th of February in the latter year, in accordance with the views which the leading United Irishmen put forth at the Belfast meeting the 26th of December, 1792; and this convention identified the struggle for reform with that of Catholic emancipation, and gave a powerful impetus to the movement of the latter question.

The first important movement of the Catholic

[1] "The History of Belfast," p. 407.

leaders—the most important ever made by them—was the carrying into execution the plan of taking the sense of all the Catholics of Ireland through the means of a convention. The project of appointing delegates for this purpose was adopted at a meeting of the general committee, the 17th of March, 1792. The plan was proposed by Theobald Wolfe Tone, and according to Mr. Wyse was in some respects analogous to one devised by his father in 1760.[1] Here again we find the influence of the bold views of the United Irishmen. Wyse's Catholic convention was to be a secret convocation of delegates; they were to hold their hole-and-corner meetings wherever it was possible to escape detection. Tone's Catholic convention was to hold its meetings in face of day, in the metropolis, with all possible publicity; and when the delegates were appointed to carry over the petition to the king, Tone's influence and his sense of the important part he had played in bringing this project into execution, had the effect of parading the delegates through the north of Ireland, on their way to London from Dublin. At Belfast the five delegates, Messrs. Keogh, Byrne, Devereux, Bellew, and French, were received with public honours; the horses were taken from their carriage, and entertainments given them by the leading members of the United Irish Society. The

[2] Wyse's History of the Catholic Association, p. 104.

first meeting of the delegates was in Taylor's Hall, Backlane, Dublin, on the 2nd of December, 1792, on which occasion Dr. Macneven first distinguished himself as an advocate of the claims of the great majority of his countrymen. The Catholic Convention of 1793 was then the work of Samuel Neilson and Theobald Wolfe Tone. The power on which its leaders relied for resisting the opposition of the ascendency party, and daring to take so formidable a step, was the spreading influence of the northern societies, based on the principle of uniting Irishmen of all religious persuasions. This convention was to Catholic claims in 1793 precisely what the Clare election was to them in 1829; and it is singular enough to find the same man, whose clear perception distinguished the portentous signs of the times at the latter period, and saw no alternative but Catholic emancipation or civil war so far back as sixty-seven years ago, coming forward in his place in the Irish parliament in favour of a similar measure, with the view of averting the evils with which the successful proceedings of the Catholic Convention of 1793 were evidently fraught. The Hon. Lieutenant Arthur Wellesley was returned for the borough of Trim in the latter part of 1790. During the two following years his name is not found in the reports of the debates as having taken any part in them on any question.

The influence attributed to the reviled society in the accomplishment of the Catholic Relief Bill was pretty obvious in the language of the delegates of the Irish parliament; and the introduction of the Convention Bill in the month of July, 1793, was indicative enough of the vindictive feelings entertained with respect to the means by which that measure of relief was effected. When his majesty, in 1793, was pleased to recommend the case of his Roman Catholic subjects to the Irish parliament, Lord Chancellor Clare evinced his disposition towards "the swinish multitude," as he termed the people on a previous occasion, in these words: "I did not expect," said he, "that any set of men would have dared to approach the throne with a gross and malignant deception upon the father of his people. I therefore seized this first opportunity to reprobate and detect it." In the progress of the debate, Mr. Foster, in the Commons, attributed to the fact of rousing and supporting this claim all kinds of plots and conspiracies; and in the Lords, the Archbishop of Cashel, who had previously declared in the House that "the Roman Catholic religion was a religion of knaves and fools," strenuously opposed the motion.

The motion, however, was carried, and the Catholics were allowed to vote for members of parliament, and to exercise some of the minor privileges of citizens of a free state.

Tone, at the time the establishment of the club was determined on, had never been in Belfast; he was only known there as a writer whose pen had been employed in the service of the Whig club and in behalf of the Catholics. In the spring of 1791, his friend Russell, recently returned from India, having been appointed to an ensigncy on full pay in the 64th regiment of foot, then quartered in Belfast, visited that town, and became acquainted with many of the popular members of the Volunteer Association. At their instance he wrote to Tone to draw up a declaration, in which the Catholic question was to be noticed in favourable terms. Tone complied with this request; but when the declaration came to be read by the Belfast Volunteers, the passage alluding to the settlement of the Catholic claims, "for the sake of unanimity, was withdrawn for the present."

This was the first connection of Tone with the politics of Belfast, and it probably recommended him to Neilson, and those who thought with him on the subject of Catholic Emancipation. In the beginning of October, 1791, Tone states that he was invited to spend a few days in Belfast, in order to assist in forming the first club of United Irishmen, and to cultivate a personal acquaintance with those men whom, though he highly esteemed, he knew as yet but by reputation.

In consequence of this invitation, he went down with his friend Russell (who at this time, having quitted the army, had returned to Dublin), and on arrival at Belfast, the persons whom he names as having some reason to esteem himself particularly fortunate in forming connections with, were Samuel Neilson, Robert and William Simms, William Sinclaire, and Thomas M'-Cabe, "the men most distinguished for their virtue, talent, and patriotism." He proceeds to say, "We formed our club, of which I wrote the declaration, and certainly the formation of that club commenced a new epoch in the politics of Ireland."

After remaining about three weeks in Belfast, Tone and Russell returned with instructions to cultivate the leaders in the popular interest, being Protestants, and if possible to form in the capital a club of United Irishmen. It is evident that the idea of forming the Society of United Irishmen originated with Samuel Neilson, met with the concurrence of Henry Joy M'Cracken and Thomas Russell, was adopted by the Simmses, M'Tier, M'Cabe, Haslett, and Sinclaire; that Tone reduced that plan into form, and acted at the onset, in the organization of it, in accordance with the views previously taken up of those already named, and in connection, a little later, with other members of the club, of considerable influence from their wealth and station in the town.

In fact, strictly speaking, Samuel Neilson was the originator, and Tone the organizer of the society, the framer of its declaration, the pensman to whom the details of its formation were entrusted. The object of Tone in assisting in the formation of the Belfast and Dublin societies is not to be mistaken—he clearly announces it in his diary. In concluding the account of the part he took in the formation of the club, he plainly states, "To break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assist the independence of my country—these are my objects." These were the objects, too, of Neilson, there is good reason to believe.

That Russell was acquainted with Tone's views, we have a proof in a letter addressed to him by Tone in the early part of 1791, which fell into the hands of government.[1] Whatever the republican tendencies of Neilson and some of his associates may have been, the probability is, that if they had the power of choosing a form of government, although they would have given the preference to a republic over any other, they had at the beginning no definitive object beyond parliamentary independence, reform, and emancipation. Tone's influence in the Belfast societies suffered no diminution during his stay in Ireland; but in Dublin his republican opinions had a

[1] Commons' Report from Secret Committee.

very different effect. With few exceptions the leaders of the society which Tone had subsequently formed were apprehensive of being committed by his opinions. He says, "The club was scarcely formed before I lost all pretensions to anything like influence in their measures."

We find by Tone's account of his first visit to Belfast, in October, 1791, that before the United Irish Society was yet organized, there was a secret committee of the leading political men of the popular party in the town. "Their mode of doing business was by a secret committee, who are not known or suspected of co-operating, but who in fact direct the secret movements of Belfast." The members of this secret committee were William Sinclaire, Samuel M'Tier, Samuel Neilson, William M'Cleery, Thomas M'Cabe, William Simms, Robert Simms, Henry Haslett, William Tennent, —— Campbell, Gilbert M'Ilveen.

On the 14th of October, 1791, Thomas Russell and T. W. Tone were admitted members of it. It was at the meeting on that occasion the arrangements for the first public meeting of the Belfast Club of United Irishmen were entered into. M'Tier to be in the chair, Sinclaire to move the resolutions, Simms to second them, Neilson to move the printing, and Tone and Russell to state the sentiments of the people of Dublin.

On the 18th of October, 1791, the meeting took place, and Tone, having dined with Neilson, attended it. The club consisted of thirty-six original members, and six new ones were proposed on this occasion.

A committee of correspondence was formed, which consisted of Neilson, M'Tier, Haslett, and Simms. The chief business done was entering into communication with the Catholic committee, and soliciting the co-operation of the Dublin popular leaders. This committee assumed the form of a directory so early as 1793. An erroneous impression generally prevails with respect to the direction of the affairs of the United Irish Societies throughout the country. The directory of the Leinster societies, the principal members of which, subsequently to 1796, were O'Connor, Macneven, Emmet, Bond, and others of the Dublin leaders at different periods, it is commonly supposed was the only one in existence; such, however, is not the fact. Ultimately there were four directories, one for each of the provinces. The Ulster directory was the first established. The principal members of it were Samuel Neilson; two merchants of Belfast, named Simms—one recently living in that town; and Dr. White, lately residing in America. The Munster directory was only in existence a short time before the suppression of the rebellion. The

Connaught directory was likewise of short duration, and its action was more limited than any of the others.

The Ulster directory was reconstituted and regularly established about the beginning of 1795. In 1796, Oliver Bond was associated with its other members. In his examination he states that "he acted with that association in conducting the affairs of the union, and when the Leinster organization was completed, early in 1797, he was regularly elected a member of that executive, though he declined to act officially. He, however, continued in the confidence of the union, and was consulted by them on all affairs of moment." [1]

The circumstance of the early existence of the Ulster directory, and the emanation from it of the most important measures—subsequently taken up and attempted to be carried into effect by the Leinster directory—is worthy of notice. These measures, it is generally imagined, originated with the latter. Arthur O'Connor became a member of the Leinster directory in November, 1796; Lord Edward Fitzgerald and another person of exalted rank, the late Lord Cloncurry, were nominated at the same time. T. A. Emmet was not appointed till January, 1797; and Dr. W. J. Macneven about the same period. "None of

[1] Lords' Report, 1798. Examination of state prisoners.

them were members of the United system until September or October, 1796."

In November, 1796, Arthur O'Connor, accompanied by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, visited Belfast on the occasion of the former offering himself as a candidate for the representation of the county of Antrim. They took a house in the immediate vicinity of Belfast, and resided there some months. During their stay they were associated with the other members of the Ulster directory, and their intercourse with the Belfast leaders prepared the way for the combined action of the Dublin and northern societies.

CHAPTER II

ARREST OF NEILSON

NEILSON'S exertions in promoting the grand object of his society, the union of Irishmen of all religious persuasions, were not confined to his editorial labours.

He travelled through the northern counties for the purpose of composing the differences between the Catholics and Presbyterians, and the more deadly feuds between the Peep-of-day Boys and Defenders. In July, 1792, accompanied by Tone and Lowry, he proceeded to Rathfryland (his native barony), where disturbances had broken out between the Catholics and Presbyterians, and, with the assistance of the gentry of that place, for the time succeeded in restoring peace.

In August Neilson and Tone, joined by John Keogh—the gentleman styled Gog in Tone's diary—and Mr. Leonard M'Nally, again visited Rathfryland on a similar mission, fresh disturbances having broken out. They returned to Belfast without having effected their object, and Neilson and Tone had an interview with Lord Downshire on the subject of the outrages com-

mitted by the Peep-of-day Boys. His lordship deprecated their interference, attributed the disturbances to the Defenders, and said they had 4,000 stand of arms. Tone says they "admitted the 4,000 stand of arms; but they had in no one instance been used offensively." He adds, "We pinned his lordship to the confession that the Catholics have never in any case begun the attack," and finally, "we declared our conviction that if the Catholics could see that they had equal protection with the Protestants, peace would be immediately restored." [1]

In September, 1795, we find by a letter addressed to Tone from Belfast, that "Neilson had been called away by express to settle some disputes in the county Armagh, between the Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders, Charles Teeling being there before him."

The feuds which were at this time raging in Armagh were tending to involve the whole country in civil war. A few days before the battle of the Diamond, Charles Teeling, then a lad of seventeen, counting on the influence which his family possessed in this part of the county over the Catholics, and "learning with deep concern that the adverse parties were preparing for a general conflict, with the full knowledge and under the very eye of those authorities whose duty it was to have restrained them," determined on proceed-

[1] See Tone's Life, vol. i., p. 174.

ing to the scene of these disturbances, with a view "to open some channel, if possible, for a pacific arrangement, and to preserve the county from a wanton expenditure of blood." [1]

Teeling set out from Lisburn, the residence of his family, for the county of Armagh, but had not proceeded far before he discovered the difficulties of the mission he had undertaken—difficulties which the youth and inexperience of a lad of seventeen were ill calculated to cope with. It is to be observed, this act of his originated with himself, was influenced by no political motive, and that humanity alone and an abhorrence of persecution had induced him to take this step. The act deserves to be recorded, and well entitles Teeling's name to be remembered with respect and honour by his countrymen. The interruption he met with on the route from various armed parties of men, "fully appointed with all the accoutrements of a volunteer corps," about to turn their weapons against their Catholic brethren, made Teeling acquainted with the difficulties of the step he had taken; he felt that "he wanted the co-operation of a friend, and the aid of councils wiser and better than his own, and his mind could suggest none more suitable for the purpose than Samuel Neilson. He was the ardent patriot, the decided enemy to oppression in every

[1] Charles Teeling's pamphlet, "Observations on the History and Consequences of the Battle of the Diamond," Dublin, 1838.

shape and every form, and the strenuous advocate at all times and seasons of civil and religious liberty."

Teeling despatched a letter to Neilson, entreating him to meet him at Portadown, for the purpose of proceeding with him to the scene of the disturbances. In the meantime, Teeling received the news of the conflict of the Diamond; journeying homewards, he met his friend Neilson proceeding on his route from Belfast, and the following morning they returned to their respective homes.[1]

As with Neilson originated the idea of forming the Club of United Irishmen, so likewise with him the establishment of the "Northern Star," the organ of its opinions, had its origin.

In the preliminary address to the people of that paper, it is stated that "its attention shall be turned to a parliamentary reform, founded on a real representation of the people, and to the union of the people. To the former object its efforts will continue to be directed, until the venal borough trade shall cease, until corruption shall no longer, at least, be publicly avowed, and until the Commons House of Parliament shall become the real organ of the public will; then, and then only, shall the labours of 'The Northern Star' in this great national business cease."

[1] Appendix. Extracts from C. Teeling's pamphlet of "The Battle of the Diamond."

The above are the avowed, but not the only objects that paper had in view. If Tone's account of them is to be relied on, he states that it was set on foot "to give a fair statement of all that passed in France, whither every one turned his eyes; to inculcate union amongst Irishmen of all religious persuasions; to support the emancipation of the Catholics; and finally, as the necessary, though not the avowed consequence of all this, to erect Ireland into a republic independent of England. This paper, which they called appositely 'The Northern Star,' was conducted by my friend Samuel Neilson, who was unanimously chosen editor, and it could not be delivered into abler hands." [1]

Neilson, however, in his examination before the Secret Committee (as taken from his own report of it), positively denies that separation became the object of the society, before the severity of the government measures caused them to abandon their first objects—reform and emancipation.

Tone's journals leave little doubt as to Neilson's political views in the early part of 1795. "I set off," he states, "from Dublin for Belfast on the 20th of May. During a month that we remained there, we were visited every day by one or other. Even those who scarcely knew me were eager to entertain us; parties and excursions were

[1] Tone's Life, vol. i., p. 67.

planned for our amusements; and certainly the whole of our deportment and reception at Belfast very little resembled those of a man who escaped with his life only by miracles, and was driven into exile to avoid a more disgraceful fate. I remember particularly two days that we passed on the cave hill. On the first, Russell, Neilson, the two Simms, M'Cracken, and one or two more of us, on the summit of M'Art's Fort, took a solemn obligation—which I think I may say I have, on my part, endeavoured to fulfil—never in our efforts to desist, until we had subverted the authority of England over our country, and asserted her independence." [1]

Before his departure for America on the 14th of June, he adds, "I explained to Simms, Neilson, and C. G. Teeling, my intentions with regard to my conduct in America, and I had the satisfaction to find that it met, in all respects, with their perfect approbation."

On the 14th of January, 1792, the first number of "The Northern Star" was published in Belfast. The agreement entered into by Neilson with eleven of his townsmen, the majority of whom were opulent merchants of Belfast, to establish a newspaper for the dissemination of the views and principles of their society, was completed on the 3rd of July following. The capital invested in this undertaking was subscribed for

[1] Tone's Life, vol. i., p. 127.

the propagation of the political opinions held by the proprietors. Neilson was appointed the editor of the new paper, and the zeal and activity which he displayed in the management of it, soon rendered its circulation the most extensive of any paper in Ireland. Its sale for some years varied from four to five thousand each impression. Neilson embarked £500 in this speculation.

The 3rd of July, 1792, a partnership was entered into between Samuel Neilson, William Magee, Robert Caldwell, William Tennent, Gilbert M'Ilveen, jun., Henry Haslett, William M'Cleery, John Haslett, John Rabb, William Simms, John Boyle, and Robert Simms, all of Belfast.

The parties hereunto have agreed upon a partnership to carry on the printing and other business, particularly the printing and publishing of a newspaper, called "The Northern Star," for the term of twenty-one years, from January, 1792. The said business to be carried on by Samuel Neilson, with the assistance of a committee; he, S. Neilson, to receive a salary of £100 per annum, for taking charge of management. The stock in trade of said partnership to be £2000, divided into forty shares of £50 each. Neilson to have three shares, Magee three, Caldwell three, Tennent three, M'Ilveen two, Henry Haslett three, M'Cleery two, J. Haslett one, Rabb three, William Simms two, Boyle three, Robert Simms two. And further, S. Neilson was to advance £500 as manager and editor, and to hold ten shares in addition to the three former, making in

all thirteen shares. No partner to sell or alienate his shares without the consent of the co-partners.—Signed by the twelve partners.

Signed and delivered in the presence of
JOHN TISDALL,
MATTHEW HUGHES.

The preceding heads of agreement I take from the original indenture, placed in my hands by the daughters of Samuel Neilson, entered into by the proprietors, and bearing their signatures. By this agreement we find they enter into a partnership for twenty-one years to carry on a newspaper called "The Northern Star." The words deserve attention: "The said parties hereunto shall be and continue partners in the said business, and all other business and trade a majority of them shall think fit to carry on, for and during the full term of twenty-one years, to be computed from the first day of January last."

The words which I have marked are somewhat mysterious: what "other business" could a company of newspaper proprietors contemplate jointly carrying on?

The above-named twelve proprietors were men of respectability; some of them—the Simms, and Tennent, Caldwell, and, at that period, Neilson—in affluent circumstances; and all of them Presbyterians, either of the old light or Unitarian branch of that form of religion.

Neilson, assisted by a committee of the share-

holders, was entrusted with the editing of the paper. John Rabb was the printer and publisher.

The printer and proprietors were prosecuted by the crown in 1792,[1] and acquitted; again in 1794, when Rabb was found guilty, and the proprietors acquitted. In 1796, the office was attacked and plundered, the printer and proprietors were seized, sent to Dublin, and imprisoned in Newgate upwards of a year and a-half. In the early part of 1797, the office was again attacked, the printing materials destroyed, and the office pillaged by the military.

The principal contributors to "The Northern Star" were Sampson, Russell, Porter, Kelburn, and Dickson—the three last-named Presbyterian ministers. During the period of Neilson's imprisonment in 1797, his place as editor of the paper was filled at one time by Mr. Thomas Corbett of Belfast, and subsequently by Dr. Porter, the author of the articles called "Billy Bluff and the Squire." These papers were of a satirical nature, illustrative of the scenes that took place between the old Earl of Londonderry, the Rev. John Cleland, and a neighbouring farmer, who filled the office of spy and informer to the noble lord and the reverend gentleman in Belfast

[1] Mr. Gordon erroneously states that this paper was established in 1797. It commenced on the 4th of January, 1792, and ceased the 30th January, 1797.

and its vicinity. The treason of these pasquinades against two of the above personages was infinitely more perilous to the proprietors and acting editor of "The Northern Star" than any other species of seditious writing. In sporting with Billy Bluff poor Dr. Porter forgot he was playing with edge tools; he became in his turn reported to Lord Londonderry as one of his suspected neighbours, was tried by a court-martial, and executed at Grey Abbey, on a plot of ground between his own house and the place of worship of which he was minister. The unfortunate gentleman's abode was in the immediate neighbourhood of Mount Stewart House. Sampson seems to have been destined to have watched over the cradles and walked after the hearses of all the democratic journals of his time; in 1797, he was present at the office of "The Northern Star" when the destruction of its property was going forward.

The articles styled "The Hurdy-gurdy Trials" were written by Sampson; the pieces styled "The Lion of Old England" were the joint production of Messrs. Sampson and Russell. The above-named articles, and those subscribed "Yeoman" and "Monitor," were the ablest ones written in "The Northern Star." This paper appeared twice a-week, and its sale amounted to 4,200 at the time of its suppression. In 1795, several of the proprietors withdrew, and Neilson was then

induced to give up his business and devote his entire attention to the paper, and in a short time he was left the sole proprietor of it. Not one of the original proprietary is now living; Mr. Robert Simms of Belfast was the last survivor of them. He died about eight years ago.

At the time that this paper was put down the law had not given the summary power of seizing on the materials and property of an obnoxious press, and of incarcerating its proprietors; nevertheless "The Northern Star" was put down, and its proprietors suffered imprisonment for upwards of a year and a-half, and were then set at large without having been brought to trial.

Tone's correspondence, indeed, leaves no doubt whatever that so early even as 1791 the extreme opinions entertained by himself and Russell, with respect to British connection, were shared by Neilson and several of their common friends, who subsequently became the proprietors of this paper. In this respect they differed widely from the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin; and the fact of Tone, the founder of it, immediately after its organization, losing all influence in it, by his own admission, and never but once acting at any of its meetings in an official capacity, shows that the leaders of the society in Dublin were ready and willing, at any period previously to 1795, to stop at the Hounslow Half-way-house of parliamen-

tary reform, while their northern friends were bent on going to the full journey end of revolution.

The literary ability displayed in "The Northern Star" was certainly inferior to that exhibited in "The Press," but it served the purpose better of the United Irishmen. Its circulation was far more extensive, and its success was mainly due to the indefatigable efforts of Samuel Neilson. In the latter part of 1794 he became sole proprietor of the paper. The various prosecutions carried on against it had obliged Neilson, about this period, to dispose of all his property, and to relinquish his business, in order to meet the enormous expenses attendant on these proceedings, and the unexpected demands arising from them. The other proprietors, shortly after the prosecutions, disposed of their share to Neilson, and thus encompassed with peril he became the sole proprietor of the paper. In 1792 the printer and proprietors had been prosecuted and acquitted. In January, 1793, six informations were filed in the King's Bench against them for seditious libels, and in November, 1794, they were prosecuted for publishing the address of the United Irishmen to the Volunteers. In September, 1796, the office was attacked and ransacked, and Neilson and several others were arrested, conveyed to Dublin, and committed to Newgate, where they remained till the latter part of 1797. In the month of May,

1797, the office was again attacked by a military rabble, the presses broken, the types thrown into the street, and the paper finally suppressed. The particulars of the arrest in September, 1796, are given in "The Northern Star" of the 16th:

This morning presented a very unusual appearance in this town. A large body of cavalry appeared in arms, the whole garrison was turned out, the artillery paraded, and there was every show of war. Several great people came to town—Mr. John Pollock, attorney, attended by Lord Downshire, Lord Westmeath, Lord Castlereagh, &c. Detached guards were placed in several parts of the town, and several of the inhabitants were arrested under warrants signed by Mr. Justice Boyd. Counsellor Sampson's house, in particular, was beset with soldiers, and searched by virtue of a warrant to apprehend Mr. Samuel Neilson for high treason, who at the same moment was walking publicly on 'Change. This search was made by the Earl of Westmeath, accompanied by Captain Coulson of the artillery, and a large armed guard of horse and foot. Mr. Sampson assured these gentlemen that Mr. Neilson had been but a few minutes before at his house, where he always had been a welcome guest, and had left it so lately that he was surprised they had not met him on the way. Mr. Sampson said his wife had lain in some days before, and might be alarmed at such an appearance. Lord Westmeath made the usual apologies, and searched every room, closet, pantry, &c., in the house, and amongst the rest searched that of Mrs. Sampson, although Mr. Sampson jocularly assured him she was not, as some

other ladies are, in the habit of privately harbouring gentlemen.

Some time after his departure he returned to search the hay-loft and certain other premises which we shall not name. Mr. Sampson offered to open some band-boxes, but that was politely refused on the part of the noble lord; upon which Mr. Sampson assured him that he must have had very ignorant advisers respecting houses and persons of Belfast, when he was directed to look either for any concealment in his house, or, what is more, when he supposed that Mr. Neilson, who was an honest and honourable man, would be found concealed in any place. Accordingly, when the guard was removed from his door, he went on 'Change, and communicated what had passed to Mr. Neilson, who was walking there.

Mr. Neilson thereupon stepped to his own house, and related to a virtuous wife what had passed, who in two words encouraged him never to return home with any stain of baseness or dishonour. He then repaired to the artillery barrack, where he surrendered himself to Lord Westmeath. The earl seemed reluctant to take him into custody, as he said he had given the warrant out of his hand. Mr. Neilson replied that he did not intend to be captious, and that he would remain in his custody till it could be sent for; upon which he went into the public library belonging to the Society for Promoting Knowledge, where Mr. Pollock and Lord Downshire were in pursuit of something, and gave himself into custody, observing that a speedy trial was all he wished for or wanted; that he hoped, however, for the sake of public sentiment, and for peace, that he might not be, as many men of late had been, kept in gaol for a year without

any trial at all. It is to be observed, that the foreman compositor of the "Northern Star" was taken into custody and a number of papers seized, without any warrant to that effect. This was the most direct attack yet made upon the freedom of the press. The private papers of several other persons were seized upon and sealed up by Mr. William Atkinson, the constable.—Several informers acted under Mr. Pollock and Lord Downshire on this occasion—some disguised, some not.

It is but proper to observe, that Lord Westmeath, at the desire of Mr. Sampson, did not make this search till Mr. Bristow, whose appearance might give some colour of law to the transaction, came at Mr. Sampson's request. Mr. Haslett, Mr. Shanagan, Mr. R. Osborne, and Mr. Young were arrested, and Mr. Russell surrendered himself as Mr. Neilson had done.

About half-past three, the armed procession, with their prisoners, left town. We have not time to give a description of it: suffice it to say, that Mr. Pollock, the attorney, conducted himself with as much firmness as the patriotic Castlereagh, the disinterested Lord Downshire, the amiable, virtuous, and accomplished Earl of Westmeath did—with manly courage and dignified wisdom. In short, they did that by dint of nightly scouring and martial attack which no human creature was disposed to resist, and which the meanest constable in town could have done as well as they.

Tone, on hearing of the arrest of Neilson and Russell, speaks of the event in his diary as the heaviest blow that could fall on their cause: "It is impossible to conceive the effect this heavy misfortune has upon my mind. If they fall, where

shall I find two such men to replace them. My poor friend Russell, with whom I have spent the happiest hours of my life, and whom I love with the affection of a brother—a man who would, I know, sacrifice his life for me or my family, if it were necessary; and Neilson, an honest, a brave, a worthy fellow—a good Irishman, a good republican: both of them who have rendered such essential service to their country. My heart smites me now for the levity with which I have spoken of my poor Russell in those memorandums under the name of P. P." [1]

On the Sunday morning (the day after the prisoners had been lodged in Newgate,) they were escorted with considerable military parade to the house of Mr. Justice Boyd, where their committals were made out; and as they were ordered to stand forth and answer to their respective names, we are informed by Charles Teeling, who was one of the prisoners, that Neilson seemed to treat the matter more lightly than some of his companions, or than comported with the character or the office of the judge, who was "remarkable for the correctness of his judicial conduct, as well as for the virtues which adorned his private life."

The following is Teeling's account of the scene:—On Neilson being ordered to stand forth —"Samuel Neilson." "Here."—"You stand charged with high treason against"—— "Whom,

[1] Tone's Life, vol. ii., pp. 222-3.

my lord?" "Suffer me to go on, sir." "With great respect, I wish to set your lordship right." "I am right, sir." "And sober, too," whispered Neilson, with a good humoured smile.

"The gravity of poor Russell, however, seemed to have been offended. No man regarded etiquette and the punctilios of politeness more. He looked solemn, stroked his fine black hair, and with a sweetness of expression peculiarly his own, and in a gently modulated but sufficiently audible tone of voice, he begged of his friend Neilson to respect the dignity of the bench and the personal virtues of the learned judge. Neilson bowed respectfully, &c. Though the judge could not have distinctly heard what passed, he was not perfectly free from embarrassment." The prisoners were reconducted to prison; pens, ink, and paper were prohibited, and all intercourse with their friends was forbidden.[1] Solitary confinement was at first enjoined, but the prisoners soon found means to baffle the vigilance of the keepers. They contrived to detach the locks from the doors, and at night, when the gaoler retired to rest, the prisoners visited one and another, or assembled in one of the largest of their cells, and spent the night in social intercourse. In the morning the locks were replaced, and a length of time elapsed before a discovery was made. The rigour of their treatment after some time was relaxed, and as

[1] Teeling's Narrative, p. 37.

the number of prisoners increased, separation became impossible.

Their friends outside the prison managed likewise to elude the watchfulness of the officers of the prison. On one occasion, Mrs. Bond obtained permission to send a pie to the prisoners, on removing the crust of which they found, to their great delight, a supply of writing materials, foreign and domestic newspapers, letters from their friends, &c. The prisoners were now enabled to communicate with their friends; and the result of their interference was, that government accorded permission to such of the prisoners as were married to see their wives. Neilson, however, tenderly as he loved his wife, declined to avail himself of it. He wrote to her, dissuading her from coming to Dublin. "I cannot," he said, "suffer you to undertake a long and fatiguing journey at this season of the year, to visit me in my cell. Here your nerves will be shocked by the brutality of a turnkey, and at the Castle your pride will be wounded by the insolence of a minion in office." Before the letter reached Mrs. Neilson, she had already obtained an order for admission to the prison. Teeling ascribes this indulgence to the prisoners to the humane interference of Lord O'Neil. Teeling's father had previously ineffectually sought permission to visit his son; he addressed several letters to his early friend, Lord Castlereagh, and to the last his lord-

ship replied, "You should state some specific grounds for the permission sought;" to which Teeling answered, "I can state no specific grounds for the permission sought, save that God and nature require parental attention to my child, which, considered in a ministerial point of view, may not be deemed sufficient." [1]

Visits, however, of another kind were made to the prisoners, the motives for which it is impossible to divine. On one occasion the prisoners were roused from their beds at midnight; their cells, in succession, were visited by the commander-in-chief, Lord Carhampton, "accompanied by two officers of the staff, a brutal turnkey, and four soldiers with fixed bayonets." Teeling says, on the door of his cell being opened, "the full visage of the turnkey with a dark lantern in his hand; the presence of soldiers under arms; and the horrid features, a countenance the most repelling I ever beheld, all conspired to fill my soul with terror." Teeling was asked by his lordship how long he had been confined; and on being told from September, 1796, the commander-in-chief remarked "it was a long confinement." Teeling having addressed him by name, he said, "Ha! you know me, then: good night,

[1] The families of the state prisoners confined in Kilmainham were hospitably treated and succoured on all occasions, when they stood in need of assistance, by an old gentleman of the name of James Dickson, who lived near Kilmainham. Mrs. Neilson was kindly received by him on her arrival from the north.

sir." He next visited Neilson's cell, and being recognised by Neilson, he begged to be informed where Neilson had known him, "as he did not recollect ever having had the honour of his acquaintance." Neilson replied, he had the honour of being reviewed by his lordship in the first battalion of Irish Volunteers; and was proceeding to remind his lordship of some passages in their volunteering days, when Lord Carhampton stopped him by informing him, "Those days were gone by; they were not fit subjects for prison reflection; he must dream of something else than Irish volunteers."

The cell of the Rev. Sinclare Kelburn and Dr. Crawford was next visited. They were unacquainted with the person of Lord Carhampton. His lordship observed, on entering, they were up at an early hour. Kelburn replied, "*Up,* captain, is the order of the day." His lordship, pointing to a chair, said, "Then, sir, I recommend you to be down." The chair was offered to the visitor, and declined with the observation that "he never sat in the company of traitors." The term was thrown back; it was an awkward word to have fallen from the lips of a Luttrell. His lordship then proceeded to the common hall, at the end of the corridor, where a number of young men were confined who had only been committed the day before. In an old foraging cap, belonging to one of the prisoners, he observed a small knot of

green ribbons; he immediately demanded to whom it belonged. A young man of the name of William Gordon, a nephew of Samuel Neilson, the son of a Protestant clergyman in Ulster, without any hesitation said, "It is mine." His lordship's glance of indignation did not seem in the least to disconcert young Gordon. A slight inclination of the head conveyed his lordship's wishes to the turnkey; in a few seconds he returned with irons. When he was putting on the fetters, several of Gordon's companions exclaimed he might do the same with them. The commander of the forces coolly answered, "Let them be indulged." The operation of ironing several of them was performed in his presence; and while the turnkey and his assistants were thus employed, the prisoners struck up one of the popular songs of the United Irishmen, and made the walls of the prison resound with the well-known chorus:

> Though we must to the dungeon go,
> Where patriots dwelt before,
> Yet, in the cell or on the sod,
> We 're Paddies evermore.[1]

This visiting of the gaols was a favourite pastime of Lord Carhampton. He paid similar visits to a prisoner of the name of Dunne, who was charged with conspiring to assassinate him. A few days before his trial, at one of these visits,

[1] Teeling's Narrative, p. 64.

the certainty of the man's condemnation and execution did not prevent his lordship from committing an assault on the prisoner in his dungeon, by striking him in the face with his cane, and inflicting a wound, which his lordship accounted for on the trial by stating that the prisoner Dunne having denied the truth of a former admission of his guilt, "upon his coming up close to him, and not liking his looks, having nothing but a switch in his hand, he (Lord Carhampton) said, 'Keep off, you scoundrel;' and the end of the switch being scraggy, tore the skin under the eye." [1]

Neilson and his associates, however, had the satisfaction of receiving visits of a more agreeable nature than those of Lord Carhampton. Their northern friends continued from time to time to gain admission to their prison. The wife of Neilson, the sister of Henry Joy M'Cracken, the sister of Henry Haslett, found means, even when the caprice of power interrupted the indulgence that had been granted to the prisoners, to get access to them. In reference to the strength of family affection such as theirs, it might be truly said that "stony limits cannot hold love out."

Teeling gives a touching account of the scene that took place when his aged father at length succeeded in gaining admission to him. Long

[1] Ridgeway's Report of the Trial of James Dunne, p. 37.

confinement had then broken down the health and spirits of himself and his companions. He was conversing with Neilson and M'Cracken when his father entered the cell. They "looked for a moment at each other without uttering a word; the son observing with sorrow the sad change which anxiety and trouble had made in his father's appearance since they had last met; the latter scarcely recognising in the pale features and debilitated form of the prisoner the youthful son he had parted with full of life and health a year before. Greetings in a prison are somewhat worse than those that Sterne speaks of in the market-place. The old man, turning from his son, addressed Neilson: 'The atmosphere of a prison, I perceive,' said he, pointing to his son, 'is not favourable to the bloom of youthful plants.' 'We will bloom yet,' said Neilson, 'on the mountain's brow, where the wild heath blossoms, without parliamentary permission.' "

At the expiration of an hour, the old man was given to understand "that it was time to retire." "After a few words of paternal advice," says Charles Teeling, "he pressed his hand on my head, and endeavouring to conceal the emotions of his heart he said, in a voice I shall never forget, 'God bless you.' Neilson and M'Cracken were scarcely less moved than myself; we were silent and sorrowful." The poor old man himself, "the early friend of Castlereagh," in a short

time after this interview was thrown into a dungeon, where he lingered nearly four years, and during his imprisonment, by the free quarters system, had all his property destroyed. He had given offence to government by acting as secretary to a meeting at which a petition was resolved on to the king, praying for the dismissal of his majesty's ministers.

Teeling and Neilson, like the Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. William Steele Dickson, had rendered electioneering services to the young patriot, Robert Stewart, who became, in after years, the patricide Castlereagh. He was not a man in an altered condition of principles or position to forget or forgive any signal service rendered to him before his change. Mr. Dickson has given, in the narrative of his confinement, valuable evidence as to the nature of Castlereagh's friendship, and borne testimony also to the remarkable fearlessness, coolness, and self-possession of his young patrician friend in circumstances of extreme peril.

His observations may be prefaced here, without irrelevance, with a few words concerning the origin and early career of this nobleman, who, in after life, did more deadly mischief in cold blood to his country than probably was ever previously effected against its vital interests by one of its own sons.

The memorable Robert Stewart, the only surviving son of Robert, first Lord of Londonderry, by his first marriage, with Lady Sarah Conway, daughter of the Earl of Hertford, was born in 1769, a year memorable for the birth of Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington. He received his early education at Armagh, and in the latter part of 1786 was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge.

An electioneering circular, written in June, 1790, giving the names of many of the Belfast leaders who were the supporters of the Independent interest, as represented by Robert Stewart, the juvenile patriot, whose early promise was realized after the fashion of the great men of those times—by Lord Castlereagh a few years later.

SIR—At a meeting of the committee who conducted the late election for this county on behalf of the Independent interest, at the Donegal Arms, Belfast, on the 11th June, 1790, the following gentlemen were appointed a standing committee for the purpose of supporting the Independent interest of the county of Antrim. The first meeting is to be held at Randalstown, on the 12th August next, when your attendance is particularly requested.

I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

SAMUEL NEILSON, Secretary.

Belfast, 20th June, 1790.

SIGNATURES TO CIRCULAR.

Mariot Dalway, Esq.; Edward Jones Agnew, Esq.; Thomas Morris Jones, Esq.; Thomas Thompson, Esq.; Alexander M'Manus, Esq.; Hugh Boyd, Esq.; John Staples, Esq.; John H. O'Hara, Esq.; John Stewart, Esq.; Langford Heyland, Esq.; Waddell Cunningham, Esq.; Robert Thompson, Esq.; William Sharman, Esq.; Clotworthy Rowley, Esq.; Henry William Shaw, Esq.; Barth. M'Naghten, Esq.; James White, Esq.; William Duffin, Esq.; Robert Campbell, Esq.; Charles Adair, Esq.; Adam Dickey, Esq.; John M'Clean; James Dickey; Alexander Henry, Esq.; Alexander Crawford, Esq., M.D.; Rev. John Lang; Rev. John Thompson; Rev. James Cumming; George Tandy; John Gilliland; William Robert Adair; Samuel Thompson; William Sinclaire; Alexander M'Neil; Robert Gamble; Joseph Walker; Archibald Stewart; Hugh Anderson; John Birnie; James Barber; Val. Whitta; Thomas Dickey; Samuel Neilson.

The young patriot patrician who entered parliament in the domino of a reformer, with the prestige of a colonel of Volunteers and a delegate of a Volunteer Convention, set out of course as an oppositionist and a democrat. But nature had not constituted Robert Stewart for a patriot. That kind of courage which qualifies a man to adhere to early principles, to truth and honesty, to any cause that is just, whether the sun of power and the smiles of men in authority shine on it or not, belonged not to him. The ardour of his patriotism and reform zeal cooled fast and

suddenly, when he got a good tenure of his seat in parliament, in that field of the future operations and designs of his ambition to attain to official power.

In the true spirit of an apostate, the Right Honourable Robert Stewart manifested in power the implacable hatred he bore to his quondam political friends and supporters, in his dealings with the Rev. Steele Dickson.

He took active steps against him; took a prominent part in his arrest; consigned him to a dungeon, kept him there for years, and eventually sent him into exile.

Hughes, the Belfast informer, who had sworn falsely and unsuccessfully against Grattan, had been employed to trepan the prisoner Dickson into statements that might be turned to the old account of the employers of that miscreant. But that attempt failed. Another attempt to elicit information was made by Messrs. Pollock and Cleland.

Now as great pains have been taken to exculpate Lord Castlereagh from the infamy of the attempt made in the report of the secret committee of the House of Peers, to inculpate Grattan in the guilt of treason, it is deserving of notice to see what unworthy efforts were made to extort evidence against him by persons immediately in connection with Lord Castlereagh. And first, let me observe that Mr. John Pollock, the per-

son referred to by Dickson, was the crown prosecutor for Leinster, an attorney of second-rate standing in Dublin: he worked his way, by dirty dealings in his profession with spies and informers, into the confidence of the executive, and into the disreputable office of a secret legal agent of government, engaged in terrifying prisoners into confessions, applying secret service money to the purposes of corrupting witnesses, and tampering with jury panels.

This man, in virtue of his functions in the reign of terror, was in close communication and correspondence, there is ample evidence in official documents that have been in my possession, with the chief secretary, Lord Castlereagh.

The other gentleman referred to by Dickson, the Rev. John Cleland, was a sporting Protestant clergyman of Newtownards, a justice of the peace, a protégé of Lord Castlereagh, and a firebrand and terrorist in his locality. Dickson thus speaks of him:

'During the deliberations of the authorities on my case, my wife and two daughters resided in Newtownards, the birth-place of Lord Viscount Castlereagh, and residence of the Rev. John Cleland, formerly private tutor, or rather footman, to his lordship, and then, as denominated by his late friends, Merry and Newell, master of his croppy-hounds, pointers, and terriers. With this office he held the agency of the Earl of Londonderry, and "that of cure of souls" in the vicar-

age of Newtownards, and, as may be alleged, by virtue of this office, the keeping of some consciences. Thus robed in office, and vested with authority sacred and profane, his influence owned no control; and access to the secrets and secret places of the town was said to have been open to him. Of these places, the post-office was not the least likely to supply entertainment, or even the information yet hunted after at Newtownards. The postmaster had long been a servant in the Stewart family, even for years before it had a peer to boast of.[1] . . .

Mr. Pollock was sent to Belfast to forward and conduct such trials, before courts-martial, as he might think expedient to bring on. Anxious to see some of the objects of his mission—and, as he gave me reason to suppose, me in particular—he visited us on the very night of his arrival, and in a style which surprised us. At a late hour, just as we, poor prisoners, had laid ourselves down to rest, but not to sleep, our ears were arrested by a voice, not very articulate or musical, bellowing execrations against "the d——d infernal traitor," and frothing out, "Where is the scoundrel Dickson?" On looking up I saw a figure, not very gainly or dignified, accompanied by two gentlemen, approaching me, preceded by a sentinel. He seemed rather unsteady in his gait; but whether the oscillation was in him or in my drowsy eyes I shall not pretend to determine. His language to me, during the few minutes he was allowed to stay, I shall not repeat. That I leave to Mr. Pollock, if he can or chooses to recollect it. I shall only say, that either from regard to him,

[1] Dickson's Narrative, p. 169.

to me, to both, or to our common nature, the gentlemen turned him round and carried him off, raging as he was, and swearing that "he would hang the traitor next day."

On that next day, or the day following, I was summoned by a guard to wait on Mr. Pollock. I instantly obeyed, and was conducted to his apartments in the house of Mr. M'Cluncy, surgeon, nearly opposite to our prison. My entrance seemed to discompose him very much; but I was soon led to think that he had partly discomposed himself before my arrival. The Rev. John Cleland was sitting with him when I entered, and stayed in the room for some time. After a few questions and remarks respecting traitors, treason, &c., put and made in Mr. Pollock's peculiar manner, he asked me if I knew "Mr. Grattan," as he afterwards asserted, but, as I then thought, and still think, "Mr. Curran." In consequence, I answered that I did; which led to the following conversation: "You have often met him, I suppose?" "Not often, but always with great pleasure." "Suppose you correspond?" "Sometimes we have correspondence." "And pray, sir, what have been the subjects of your correspondence—Irish politics, no doubt?" "We have corresponded on more subjects than one, but seldom on politics. I will show you a specimen of our correspondence, if you desire it." This desire he expressed with eagerness; on which I handed him a letter from Mr. Curran, which I happened to have in my pocket. This he hurried over with devouring eyes, till he came to the subscription, when he exclaimed in rage: "Z——ds, this is not from Grattan." "Grattan!" cried I; "no, surely! It was Mr. Curran you asked about." "No, by H——ns! I

need not ask about him. I know you and he were never asunder at the assizes last year. You were d——d busy there packing juries, and tampering with the sheriff, to save traitors from the gallows. It was Grattan I mentioned." "Be assured, then," said I, "I never saw Mr. Grattan in my life, nor ever had any correspondence with him of any kind; and as to packing juries, I hope you do not mean to wound this gentlemen (looking towards Mr. Cleland) through my sides." Mr. Cleland got up and walked off without even making his bow; and Mr. Pollock, as if recollecting himself, became calm, and seemed uneasy—I suppose from having made a greater blunder here than between the names "Grattan" and "Curran"; as the array had been twice challenged at the Down assizes, in 1797, on the alleged ground that Mr. Cleland had given a partial panel to the sheriff. Be this as it may, to this blunder I probably owed my dismissal, for a season, and return to my prison, in charge of the guard which had conducted me to Mr. Pollock. Be it noted, however, that I was not dismissed without the friendly assurance, that "if I did not do what government expected I would certainly be hanged—by the E——l G—d, I would." [1]

The government informer, Bird, about this time, having deserted his employers and fled to the camp of the United Irishmen, made disclosures of atrocious acts he had been called on to execute, not with the dagger or the knife, but with the holy Bible in his hand, against many persons of rank and station who were obnoxious

[1] Dickson's Narrative, pp. 65, 68.

to the government, and, amongst the rest, Grattan. One of the state prisoners, Dowdall, a natural son of Hussey Burgh, communicated by letter, through J. P. Curran, to Grattan, the fact of Bird having been discovered and committed to Newgate on the charge of having forfeited his recognizance on certain trials in which he was to give evidence, and having confessed to the state prisoners that he was privy to designs on the part of exalted individuals that affected Mr. Grattan. Curran neglected or thought it more advisable to decline communicating with Bird on this subject; and Grattan subsequently expressed a great deal of regret that advantage had not been taken of Bird's offer to communicate with Mr. Curran on the subject.

Dowdall was instructed to write to Bird, calling on him to address a letter to Mr. Grattan, disclosing the nature of the efforts that had been made to induce him to implicate that gentleman.

Bird, in concurrence with this application, wrote the following letter to Mr. Grattan, which, with the preceding particulars, are taken from the late Mr. Henry Grattan's life and times of his father:[1]

[1] "Life and Times of the Right Hon. H. Grattan," vol. iv., p. 426.

J. BIRD TO MR. GRATTAN.

State Prison, Dublin Castle, 1st December, 1798.

Sir—The ephemeral triumph of corruption and vice by no means makes me repent having quitted the blood-stained banners; and amid the evils of a rigid confinement, the consciousness of having torn some intended victims from its merciless fangs affords me a consolation in my solitary dungeon superior to any I have before experienced.

By a strange concatenation of circumstances, some very important secrets have been thrown into my power, a part of which is, I believe, ere this developed by me in a letter I addressed to the Marquis of Cornwallis, and signed "Humanitas"; but a still more important one, and inexpressibly gratifying to my feelings, has placed one of your venal persecutors (and the most celebrated one, too) completely within my grasp, and I have already secured such corroboration as shall strike conviction into the breasts of those sanguinary and bigoted wretches who wish by any means to effect your destruction, though they dare not avow it.

Till I know that this letter is received safe I shall not be more explicit; nor can I publicly avow it till I am liberated (of which I have not the smallest prospect), except a prosecution by the state follows a prosecution by hirelings and assassins, in which no consideration whatever shall hinder my coming forward, if, sir, when you are possessed of particulars, you should deem such an act requisite to insure your safety.

You had once, sir, an opportunity of witnessing, that when the proof of enormities committed by the

government against the governed was about to be investigated, I did not shrink from my part, but offered to appear and be examined at the bar of the House of Peers. This, sir, I trust will secure me credit when I assert, that in this communication I have no other than direct views, which centre in one point—a most ardent desire of securing your life from murderers, and your character from perjured calumniators.

I have the honour to be, with the most profound respect, Sir, your most obedient servant,

J. BIRD.

N.B.—Mr. ——— is the medium through which I transmit this letter, and anything that may hereafter occur in this business can be done through the same channel; but no person can call on me with safety, as Major Sirr takes up every one whom he knows of coming to see me.

In December, 1798, Dowdall wrote to Mr. Grattan, to inform him that the letter he had written to Bird "was discovered in his room, and occasioned his being sent to England in irons to prevent any further communications."

Here the curtain drops over the career of Mr. Bird; his name and exploits are no more heard of in the woful records of the crime and infamy of 1798, till we find him again at his old trade, in communication with Major Sirr.—*Vide* the major's papers in Trin. Coll. Lib. Dub.

Among the original papers of the late John Sweetman, Esq., placed at my disposal by his son, there is a letter of Mr. Sweetman's (written

in 1798, he being then in confinement) to John Philpot Curran, deserving of notice:

LETTER TO J. P. CURRAN, ESQ.

20th September, 1798.

Dear Sir—In reading over the Report of the Lords, I see that Mr. Samuel Neilson, very much to my astonishment, has mentioned names, particularly Mr. Grattan's. He has stated that he went to Tinnehinch, in company with Bond and me, twice in April, and has detailed a conversation that he says took place at those interviews. I need not delay you long to prove the assertion false; it is enough to say that Bond and I were arrested on the 21st of March. But it may be said that Neilson was only wrong as to dates,[1] and meant to allude to some friendly visits that he, Bond, and I paid to Mr. Grattan before the 12th of March. I must declare he is totally unfounded, but right as to matter of fact, and solemnly aver that no such conversation as he has stated did take place upon these occasions. I feel myself bound to go further, by asserting that in my mind nothing ever dropped from Mr. Grattan which would warrant him to ask the question professed to have been asked him, and I know it was agreed upon by us that no such question should ever be put to him—that anything like the slightest implication in the matters of the United system could not be imputed to him.

This examination would not rest so deeply on my mind, but that I see an evident intention in the ex-

[1] Such was the fact as to dates; but Neilson's assertion, with respect to the two interviews with Mr. Grattan, is perfectly correct.—R. R. M.

aminators to heap obloquy on the character of Mr. Grattan, even in the face of truth; for, if it were not so, they would correct the anachronism, well knowing that it was false that Bond and I were at Tinnehinch in April. This is proved by the committee having asked Neilson, "Is this the Mr. Sweetman now in prison?" If truth had directed the inquiries of that committee, they would have said, "Then Sweetman could not have been with them." On the whole, I owe it to Mr. Grattan, as far as in my power lies, to remove any misrepresentation that may be attempted against his character by side-wind or otherwise; and I call for your advice whether it be not incumbent on me to write to the chancellor to rectify these errors. I might, at the same time, take occasion to say, that from a very clear intimacy with him, which I had the happiness to enjoy, and for the reasons before stated, I would solemnly aver that Mr. Grattan was totally unconnected with the United system. If you think it is my duty to carry this intention into effect, or if there be any better mode of effecting it, *candidus impertite*, and I will act accordingly. You would have been troubled with this earlier, but that I have been confined to my bed for some days back. I am now much better, and will be happy to hear you enjoy good health, which is all you can promise yourself under the present state of things.

I am, my dear Sir, with the most sincere and lasting esteem, yours faithfully,

(Signed) JOHN SWEETMAN.

The foul attempts of the government, in alliance with Orangeism, against Grattan's life and liberty was not an original or a solitary ingenious

device, of this kind, of the chief actors in our last reign of terror.

We find, in the pages of the particularly unscrupulous Orange historian of the different Irish rebellions, evidence of the same attempt that had been made against Grattan's life deliberately put in practice against the memory of an Irishman perhaps more illustrious.

The biographers of Edmund Burke observe with some surprise that an Irish historian—whose veracity is on a par with his meekness and moderation, and both in the highest estimation with the Orangemen of Ireland—Sir Richard Musgrave, Bart., has coupled the name of the illustrious orator with the murders and outrages of the Whiteboy rabble in 1761 and 1762.

The following passages occur in the "Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland," Ed. Dublin, 4to, 1801, pp. 34, 35, 36:

> In the year 1762, they (the Whiteboys) committed such dreadful excesses in the south of Ireland, that Sir Richard Aston, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was sent down with a special commission to try them; and the mistaken lenity which he showed them in the course of his circuit was such that it encouraged them to persevere in the commission of enormities for some years after. . . .
>
> It appears by the examination of David Landragin (Appendix, Nos. 1, 2) that a party of Whiteboys took a solemn oath, in the town of Clonmel, to assassinate the Earl of Carrick and the other gentlemen. . . .

As Mr. Edmund Burke, who always showed a decided attachment to Popery, manifested it for the first time on this occasion, I shall, in touching on it, relate a few of the early circumstances of his life. . . .

At last, when he had served a sufficient number of terms to be called to the bar, he refused to return to his native country, declaring that the climate of it disagreed with him, and that he expected to get some employment in the line of his profession in America, through one of the Grenville family. . . .

When the enormities of the Whiteboys were about to draw on them the vengeance of the law, and some time before Sir Richard Aston proceeded on his commission to try them, Mr. Edmund Burke sent his brother Richard, who died Recorder of Bristol, and Mr. Nagle, a relation, on a mission to Munster, to levy money on the Popish body for the use of the Whiteboys, who were exclusively Papists.

In the third edition of his work, published in 1802, Sir Richard, having determined that Burke should not have the benefit of the doubt implied by the latter part of the sentence, struck out the last sentence of the note, and let it stand thus:

I have no other proof that these gentlemen were employed by Mr. Burke than that they declared so, without reserve, to the persons from whom they obtained money.

There is nothing new under the sun—even in the annals of Irish Orangeism.

In 1797, old Lord Londonderry having been promoted in the peerage, the title of Lord Castle-

reagh was conferred on Mr. Robert Stewart; and in the same year Earl Camden (then viceroy of Ireland), whose sister has been married, *en secondes noces,* to Lord Castlereagh's father, Castlereagh was appointed Keeper of the Privy Seal in Ireland.

On the sudden departure, on the plea of illness, from Ireland, in December, 1797, of the chief secretary, the Hon. Mr. Pelham, Lord Castlereagh was called on to execute Mr. Pelham's duties during the absence of the latter. In February, 1798, Mr. Pelham returned for a short time to Ireland; but his alleged illness incapacitated him for the business of his office, and Lord Castlereagh continued to transact it *ad interim.*

It was only in 1798 that a public notification of the fact of Lord Castlereagh's having charge of Mr. Pelham's duties as *locum tenens* of the latter was made; and though he continued so charged with them to the end of his official career in Ireland, it was only in April, 1799, that Lord Castlereagh was gazetted as chief secretary of the lord lieutenant, in the place of the Hon. Mr. Pelham, resigned.

Elsewhere I have given ample details concerning Lord Castlereagh's official career in Ireland, and his connection with the reign of terror in that country, which he survived about one-and-twenty years. Let the memory of Castlereagh, and the

just abhorrence in which it is held in his country, serve ever for a warning to public men in high places, to deter them from following his profligate and wicked example and meriting his wretched fate.

Anne Devlin

The Faithful Peasant Heroine. From a Water Color Drawing Made for Dr. Madden

CHAPTER III

NEILSON IN CONFINEMENT

THE northern prisoners in 1796 and 1797 confined in Kilmainham gaol were S. Neilson, C. Teeling, H. Haslett, H. J. M'Cracken, Rowley Osborne, James Bartley, Dan. Shanaghan, and Thomas Richardson. The latter was the only Tyrone magistrate bordering on Armagh who, at the time of the persecution, would take an information against the Orangemen. At the instance of H. J. M'Cracken—who had at that period gone down to Armagh, and taken a most active part in getting information against the depredators—Richardson took the depositions. Russell was then confined in Newgate, and also Young.

Neilson had been very active and instrumental in obtaining the return of the Hon. Robert Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh) on the reform interest of the county Down, in opposition to Lord Hillsborough and the Tory interest, in 1790.

In 1797, when Neilson was confined in Kilmainham, Lord Castlereagh visited that prison. On seeing him there he expressed regret, and

asked if he could in any way be serviceable to him. Neilson thanked his lordship; he had nothing to ask for himself, but if he felt disposed to do an act of justice and mercy, he would direct his attention to the case of two poor men in the yard into which the window of his apartment looked. They were under sentence of death for an offence of which they were as innocent as his lordship—that of taking arms; having been met by a party who were out on such an expedition, and compelled to accompany them. The wretch who had sworn against them felt such remorse that his nightly wailings and lamentations were distressing to the other prisoners—the cell in which he was confined being under the apartment his lordship then stood in. The names of the two unfortunate men were Pat Whelan and Martin Short; both had large families. Lord Castlereagh seemed much touched, took notes, and promised to intercede for them. That night there came a reprieve, and shortly after they were liberated. Would to God there were many more such stories to tell of Lord Castlereagh.

A daughter of Neilson (the late Mrs. M'Adam) was in Kilmainham when that reprieve arrived, and witnessed the joyful scenes which ensued when the families of the prisoners were allowed to see their friends, immediately after the communication of the reprieve was made to them.

Neilson and his northern companions remained in prison for nearly a year and a half. They made frequent applications to the chief secretary to be brought to trial; but the government was in possession of no evidence they could rely on for their conviction. The magistrates in the north had indeed not neglected the ordinary means to procure witnesses against Neilson, Russell, and M'Cracken, who were especially obnoxious to the ascendancy party of Belfast.

A weaver of that town, who was a member of the Society of United Irishmen, was applied to long before their arrest by a Mr. Ferris Martin, an Orangeman of Ballynahinch, to lodge information against them, and was offered £500 if he would give evidence that would lead to their capital conviction. The weaver asked for time to consider the proposal, and the first step he took was to communicate it to the parties who were to be sworn against. He was instructed to give Mr. Ferris Martin a meeting at a public house which the parties were in the habit of frequenting, and to ascertain from him the name of the person who empowered him to offer the reward.

The meeting took place, and Neilson and his two friends were posted in a closet adjoining the room where these persons met. The proposal was renewed by Martin; the weaver inquired by whom the money was to be paid, and was told by Lord Hillsborough. He then expressed some doubt

whether he could do what was required of him, and said he would think further of the matter. The man, it may be presumed, had no intention of coming forward, and the parties so deeply interested in this business thus ascertained the source from which danger was to be apprehended. This circumstance was recounted by M'Cracken to his sister, on whose authority the statement is made.

An Englishman of the name of Bird, alias Smith, who had been one of the scribes of the notorious "Dublin Journal," was found a more manageable person than the Irish weaver; he was persuaded to come forward against Neilson, and was placed under the tutelage of the crown solicitor.

In these dreadful times no man, however innocent he might be, could trust to the ordinary course of judicial proceedings for protection from the baseness of a perjured witness. Men's lives depended on the detection of their enemies' designs, and the legal proceedings which were to be based on the information of such persons as Bird and Newell. The tactics of the crown solicitors and prosecutors were put into operation; the spy system was carried into their own camp. A friend of Neilson and M'Cracken, who was employed as a clerk in the office of Mr. Kemmis, apprised them of the nature of the evidence that was to be brought against them. The law officers

of the crown, at the state trials, were often astonished at the discovery of previous examinations of the approvers, and the knowledge of their disclosures, which enabled Mr. Curran to take advantage of any discrepancy in their evidence. A young man of the name of Hughes, in the employment of Mr. Kemmis, was the medium of communication on these occasions. By such means there was ample time to learn the history of the informer, and to rebut his testimony from the incongruities of his own accounts of his movements, motives for coming forward, &c. Through the channel I have referred to Henry M'Cracken contrived to have the following particulars of Mr. Bird's examination conveyed to Neilson, which I copy from the original paper, with the following words endorsed on it in the handwriting of S. Neilson: "A sample of 'the doings' of an informer and a spy against the lives of innocent men, by bearing false witness."

John Bird, alias John Smith, who underwent examination, will prove as follows:

That in September, 1795, deponent spent an evening with the said Samuel Neilson; that Samuel Kennedy,[1] in the examination aforementioned, introduced deponent as an English citizen; that they drank success to the French republic, which toast was drunk by said Neilson; they also drank success to the French army. Neilson spoke of the Irish clubs; said he was a member; gave

[1] Kennedy was conducting compositor of "The Northern Star."

a description of them corresponding with the printed paper which is herewith sent. Neilson said he was afraid that the importation of fresh troops would render nugatory any attempts to cast off the yoke, till they were visited by the French or favoured by peace, or by both.

He spoke of the independence of Ireland as an event that must take place in the common course of events. Speaking of the Catholics, Neilson said that he feared the great mass were bigoted to monarchy, but with proper attention they might be made of great service to the cause, and so he said the Defenders might be if they could be properly organized.

A person present in company asked deponent if he had any objection to take the test of their society. Neilson, speaking of the society, said the English societies were nearly done away by keeping written journals; that ours, as he expressed it, are now secure; we commit nothing to paper; we meet in small numbers; no precise fixed notice of time or place; when our numbers exceed thirty-five we split, and the overplus lays the foundation for a new society; we have a very strong test, and use caution in choosing our members, and have not yet been betrayed.

The said Neilson regretted that the Belfast committee had not sent any pecuniary aid to the Cork printer, Driscoll, then in gaol.

Neilson said he knew of six pieces of cannon which were buried, and that there were 35,000 true fellows armed and disciplined who could be raised in Ulster.

Such was the evidence Mr. Bird was to give against Neilson. The friends of the latter, how-

ever, or the small, still voice of conscience had been busy with Mr. Bird. The time for his services at length approached, Neilson was served with notice of trial, and when all the preparations of the crown lawyers were made for it, Mr. Bird, under the name of Smith, who had to give evidence against two others of the state prisoners, Shanaghan and Kennedy, on being called as a witness did not make his appearance. The crown prosecutor with some embarrassment informed the court the chief witness was nowhere to be found; it was said he was gone to England, his native country—as he was only a bird of passage and not of prey—his flight was deemed by no means extraordinary.

On the 1st of February, 1798, the following paragraphs, with accompanying copies of a correspondence between Mr. Bird, Mr. Dawes, king's messenger, and Mr. Cooke, appeared in "The Press" newspaper:

The following papers were left at our office. We have made every inquiry, and find them to be the handwriting of Mr. Bird, who was to have appeared as a witness for the crown, under the name of Smith, against Mr. Shanaghan and Mr. Kennedy, on a charge of high treason.

'Two very extraordinary affidavits were lately produced by the crown lawyers in the Court of King's Bench, in one of which I am accused of having run away from my lodgings without paying my rent! I have taken the liberty of laying before the public the

two following letters from Mr. Dawes, which will best elucidate that part of the affidavits which accuse me of having cheated Mrs. Morris. The letter to Mr. Cooke contains my reasons for the step I took. Mr. Dawes' first letter was sent to me in Waterford; his second letter was left at the house of Mr. Kemmis, directing me to where lodgings were taken for me, in which it must be evident to every person I had no kind of concern; nor did I ever pay for my board, &c. Mr. Cooke paid four pounds a-week, exclusive of which I found my wines, liquors, &c. &c. Let the public judge how far the accusation coincides with facts!'

COPY OF MR. DAWES' FIRST LETTER.

Dublin, 31st October, 1797.

Dear Sir—Mr. Taylor requests that you will come to town as soon as possible; and he thinks it would be better for you, if you wish to return, to leave your wife behind you, as you will have to stay in town but two or three days. When you come to town my father wishes you not to come to our house, as the servants would inform the people from Blessington of it. Mr. Taylor desires you will go to Mr. Kemmis's first, and there you will get directions where you are to be. My father thinks there is no better road to Dublin than what you mention in your last. I enclose you a ten guinea note, which I hope you will receive safe. I wish you a pleasant journey.

I remain yours, &c.

P.S.—I hope to hear of your arrival on Friday next.

MR. DAWES' SECOND LETTER—A NOTE.

Mr. Dawes' compliments to Mr. Johnston [1]—informs him that there is a place provided for him at a Mr. Morris's, Buckridgecourt, Great Ship-street (the upper house in the court), within four houses of the Lower Castle-yard gate.

Friday morning, 3rd November, 1797.

The succeeding letter was delivered to Mr. Cooke on Tuesday last; and the originals of the whole are now at the office of this paper, for the inspection of any persons who may think themselves interested therein.

The following extracts from the above-mentioned long letter are sufficiently illustrative of the writer's character and conduct:

SIR—That the surprise you will feel on hearing from me will be very great, I can readily conceive. But though far removed from the reach of your power, I shall ever remember you with respect; nor mean I, even in the most distant manner, to be guilty of any insult towards you. No, sir, I will not act ungratefully. You ever treated me with distinguished kindness and attention, until that creeping sycophant, P——k, strove to raise himself in your esteem by depreciating me. . . .

A number of insurmountable obstacles presented themselves, to prevent the completion of the unfortunate business which necessity—imperious necessity!—urged me to begin. For when I seriously reflected on the dreadful phalanx of perjured monsters! wallowing in

[1] "'A name I assumed by order of government for my personal safety.'"

riot! and debauchery! ready at a nod! to sacrifice any man, however innocent! who might be obnoxious, I trembled—I could not support the ignominious idea of having my name enrolled in the annals of eternal infamy with theirs, and their well-adapted major! ! !

The intimacy which with sorrow and indignation I supported with Messrs. Newell and Dutton, fully determined me what course to steer. They judged me as thirsty for blood as themselves! They unfolded their secrets to me in vicious confidence! and displayed such scenes of villainy! as would almost appal the Devil! Two more such blood-stained, sanguinary cannibals! for the honour of human nature, I hope are not, ever were, or ever again will be in existence! . . .

I have, sir, little more to add than to assure you, in the most solemn manner, that I absented myself purely from the motives before mentioned, nor was I directly or indirectly applied to. I was neither tempted with hope of reward, present or to come! but I ingenuously confess that my heart was never a single moment in your cause—a reference to my letters, though apparently "madly loyal," will convince you of that, as well as innumerable circumstances, which will now be too late recollected. Should it happen, sir, that any of your myriads of spies should discover me, it would be more unfortunate than my first loss. I have taken every precaution my experience could dictate; my papers and manuscripts, curious and interesting! are in other hands than mine, and can never be regained. I have chosen my present situation. The die is cast, and I shall await its event with fortitude and patience. I have, sir, candidly stated my genuine reason for withdrawing; and I hope, when passion shall subside, you will acquit

me for the act which neither you nor I can now recall. Whatever shall be the event, I feel my heart beat lightly, and I hope to stand acquitted before my God and my Country for the deed. I shall now, sir, take my leave, with most respectfully thanking you for every past favour and indulgence, and in despite of circumstances subscribe myself as usual, sir,

Your most grateful and much obliged humble servant, &c.,

(Signed) ——

Mr. Secretary Cooke, &c.

On the 3rd of February, 1798, a letter of Mr. Bird, addressed "To the citizens of Ulster immolated in bastiles, tenders," &c., appeared in "The Press" newspaper. He tells them that with respect to the means taken for criminating them, he

"could a tale unfold
Whose lightest word would harrow up the soul;

that the vilest of human degeneracy, intent on compassing their deaths, had entrusted him with the diabolical schemes intended to destroy them." But he tells them "he will turn the engines of their persecutors against themselves, and defeat their machinations."

Mr. Bird, it need hardly be stated, on the 3rd of February was at a convenient distance from the Castle. On the 6th of February, in "The Press," he addressed another letter to the proprietor of "The Dublin Journal," reminding him of his literary assistance to "The Dublin Journal,"

and in contradiction of a paragraph in one of its late numbers, in which it was formally announced that Mr. Bird had been assassinated by the United Irishmen. On the 11th of February he addressed another letter to the same gentleman (published in "The Press" on the 15th), in which he speaks of the services required of him by his friend Major Sirr.

The latter, he states, accompanied by Mr. Newell, had called on him the day preceding the trials at which he was to appear, and told him "that a man of the name of Parrock was come up from Belfast on the part of the prisoners, as an exculpatory witness, and requested him (Mr. Bird) to swear against him as a United Irishman, and put him up for two or three days till the trials were over." Bird objected, saying, "as the man was an Orangeman he could not be sworn against as an United Irishman." The major then requested him "to swear against him for a robbery, to secure him from coming forward." Bird still objecting to this step, "the major and Newell applied in a still more earnest manner to Mrs. Bird, requesting of her to swear a robbery against Parrock, but she refused to do so."

Bird, about a fortnight previously, had written a letter to Kennedy of "The Northern Star," then in Newgate, where he had been imprisoned for eighteen months. This letter was published in "The Press" on the 20th of February.

He tells him that a great effort was about to be made for his release, and that "he hopes most sincerely next Friday he would be sent forth from his dungeon." On the identical Friday, Mr. Kennedy was discharged without prosecution.

A few days before Mr. Neilson's release, he received the following letter from Bird:

SIR—In what language to address a gentleman whom I have so very deeply injured I scarcely know; but with the purest truth I can assure you, sir, that though plunged in a dungeon, deprived of every comfort tyranny could wrest from you, separated, for aught you know, eternally from your wife, your children, friends, and home—your property devastated, your health and vigour drooping beneath such an accumulated load of misery and woe—still, sir, had you known my real state of mind, it was infinitely less to be envied than yours. Happiness has to me been a stranger ever since the fatal day when poverty, and something worse, urged me to accept the wages of infamy. How those men may feel themselves, in whose hands I have been an instrument of ruin, I cannot say; but I strongly suspect, could the secrets of their hearts be exposed to your view, they would not be more the objects of your scorn than your pity.

The first gleams of happiness which for twelve months have visited my breast, have been since I have ceased to rank amongst the number of those sanguinary monsters, who are in fact destroying that very system they are striving to support. You, sir, will shortly be restored to that liberty which your life has been hitherto devoted to procure for others; and if you can then

think of me without horror or disgust, it is as much as I can expect, more than I deserve. Great have been the pangs of remorse I have endured, when reflecting on the situation of your amiable wife and unprotected offspring; nor did the state of poor Shanaghan's family distress me less—they, I fear, suffered more than yours in some points; but 'twont bear reflection.

I shall only further take the liberty of remarking, that if my utmost exertions to serve the men I was hired to destroy can entitle me to pardon from you and from them, I should once more feel myself restored to peace and happiness. I beg, sir, you will excuse the liberty I take, and believe me (if you can) when I assure you that no man more fervently wishes you every blessing Providence can bestow, than the person who for a time robbed you of all comfort on earth.

(Signed) J. BIRD.

Bird kept his word to Messrs. Kennedy and Neilson. He wrote to Mr. Cooke, making known to him his reasons for quitting his employment as an informer in the service of his department; and in communicating this step to the public, he makes a solemn protestation, "that Messrs. Neilson and Russell were utterly ignorant of the whole transaction," and "that he never intended to come forward to prosecute any man whatever; and that he was compelled to keep up the farce till the moment of action arrived, having determined long before how he then would act"—namely, to fly when the prisoners were brought to

trial. His letter to the viceroy, Lord Camden, appeared in "The Press" the 20th of February.

The following extracts from this singular communication are worthy of attention:

The consequence of the step I have taken has been, that two prisoners have already escaped the fate to which they had been so long doomed by anticipation. That point gained, although a very important one, by no means satisfies me. Messrs. Russell and Neilson are yet prisoners, and your lordship's great knowledge of law precludes the necessity of my asserting that there is no kind of charge whatever which can be supported against these gentlemen. Let me incur what censure I may, I am determined to restore these gentlemen to their freedom, or lose my own by the attempt. I earnestly entreat your lordship not to suppose I would deign to have recourse to empty menaces to attain my purpose. Should the enormous power and craft of your wicked counsellors prevail over the dictates of honour in your lordship's breast, then, my lord, am I irrevocably determined to place in Lord Moira's hands such documents as shall make your boldest orators dumb, and raise through the kingdom such a tornado of execration as should penetrate the cabinets of London and of Dublin. If your lordship can find no better way to unravel the mystery, apply to Kemmis; perhaps he will tremble, but he can inform you of what it is I speak, and which your honour and your interest demand should be eternally concealed or honestly explored [query, inquired into?]. I now take my final leave of your lordship, in whose breast it remains to decide on as

important an event—take it all in all—as ever presented itself to your consideration.

(Signed) J. BIRD.

P.S.—If the gentlemen herein mentioned are not restored to liberty within three days from the delivery of this letter to your excellency, I shall conceive it a direct denial, and take my measures accordingly.

Within the time specified Samuel Neilson, after a confinement of seventeen months, was set at liberty, without having been brought to trial. Mr. Bird's menace so far was successful, but Russell being still kept in prison, Bird "considered himself justified in making public the preceding communication on the 20th of February."

The report of his having quitted the kingdom was industriously circulated. The friends of the prisoners, however, who were interested in keeping him out of the hands of his late employers, contrived to afford him a safe asylum for several months. At length, in the latter part of 1798, he was discovered in the county of Louth, sent back to the care of his old friends, and committed to Newgate, charged with having forfeited the recognizance into which he had entered to give evidence on certain trials; and a little later was restored to the friendship of Major Sirr.

On the 22nd of February, 1798, Neilson was liberated on his own recognizances, and that of Mr. John Sweetman, on condition that "he should not belong to any treasonable committee."

Seventeen months of rigorous confinement had broken down his health; some part of that time he had been in separate, or rather solitary confinement: surely the mind that could bear up against such sufferings as he endured was of no ordinary original vigour. His bodily health and strength indeed had declined; and those who had formerly known him, and now saw him on his liberation, described his personal appearance as having undergone a striking change, and his once powerful frame as shrunken and debilitated. Neilson, on his liberation, was taken by his faithful friend, Mr. John Sweetman, to his country house in the vicinity of Dublin, and there received all the care that his sad condition required. It is to be observed Neilson was liberated about three weeks before the arrest of the principal leaders at Bond's. He states, in his examination before the secret committee, that he took no part in politics after his liberation until he found the government had broken their engagement with him, and he had reason to know it was intended to arrest him again, and then he took an active part in assisting to fill up the vacancies caused by the arrests at Bond's.

If Neilson laboured under considerable anxiety and restlessness of mind at this period, it is little to be wondered at. Liberated from prison in shattered health at the end of February, instead of the repose he so much needed, the events which

daily took place, as they deprived the union of its ablest leaders, and called for the renewed exertions of those who had not yet fallen into the hands of government, involved him in scenes of constant turmoil. One calamity after another fell on the Society of United Irishmen in quick succession, and Neilson had the pain of seeing his dearest friends consigned to prison, and the affairs of the union every moment requiring increased energy to prevent their total ruin. Of his increasing activity there can be no doubt. We find the following evidence of the fact in the information of Maguan of Saintfield:

At a provincial meeting in Belfast, which he attended on the 1st of April, 1798, the northern delegate who had been sent to Dublin, and just returned from that place, informed the meeting that the leaders in Leinster were particularly active in organizing the military committee, as were also some of their Ulster friends who were at present there.

He named Mr. Samuel Neilson in particular; he said "he was riding almost day and night, organizing the people; and scarcely any person knew where he slept." [1]

[1] Nicholas Maguan of Saintfield, in the county of Down, so early as 1796 an informer, in 1810 was living on a farm at Greenhill, near Banbridge, which he had purchased for £1500. His habits were then those of a social, hospitable, well-disposed kind of person. Later, however, he became intemperate and reckless in his conduct; his property went to ruin; he was cast into gaol for debt, and is supposed to have died there. He was a Roman Catholic, and appears to have stood well with his

Mr. Sweetman, at whose house Neilson resided some time after his liberation, was arrested a few days subsequently to the seizure of the other leaders in Dublin. The same information which led to their apprehension had brought to the knowledge of government that it was at his brewery in Francis-street some of the most important meetings of the executive committee had taken place.

It was at one of these meetings that the sergeants of two regiments then stationed in Dublin attended, the men of one of which were then on duty at the Castle, waiting the decision of the committee, and after a long debate the determination was come to, to postpone the rising. One of the members—on whose authority the preceding account is given—conveyed the decision of the committee to the persons in attendance at the door of the place of meeting, and the emphatic reply of the latter was (with the addition of an oath), "Then all is lost."

At one of those meetings, shortly before the 12th of March, Mr. Thomas Reynolds attended. This gentleman was then evidently making his arrangements for the disposal of his associates.

neighbours, though it was known to them eventually that he had been an informer; but he declared publicly and solemnly, in 1810, that it was through fear and dread he had been induced to give information, and that no man had ever lost his life in consequence of any information he had given, for he had entered into a compact with government to that effect; and, strange to say, my old friend, Dr. M'Donnell of Belfast, assured me he had reason to know that such was the fact.—R. R. M.

Mr. Sweetman was not present at the meeting. One of the subjects that were discussed was, the adoption of a proposal for the fabrication of pikes of a new form, which Reynolds recommended. He inquired for Mr. Sweetman, and expressed a desire to have a drawing of the proposed weapon submitted to the latter. The plea for his concurrence was the ingenuity and talent which Mr. Sweetman was known to possess in mechanics.

Mr. Sweetman, who was then attending to his business in the brewery, was accordingly sent for at the desire of Reynolds. He came into the room where the members were assembled, and Reynolds, placing the drawing of the weapon in his hand, asked his opinion of the advantage of the proposed change of form. Mr. Sweetman said he had no fault to find with it, and without further communication returned to his business. This circumstance was communicated by Mr. Sweetman to his son, the late Mr. John Sweetman, on whose unquestionable authority I have given it.

In Neilson's report of his examination before the secret committee he states, "that after the arrests at Bond's, he was very active in procuring the vacancies to be filled up which that day's arrest had occasioned, attended several committees belonging to the union, delivered some messages from Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and, together with

his lordship, was stopped by a patrol near Palmerstown, and liberated after being a short time in custody, owing to the ignorance of the officer respecting our persons." Previously to the arrests in the spring of 1798, Neilson visited the Dargle and Tinnahinch along with Mr. Bond and Mr. Sweetman, and was accompanied to the former place by Mr. Grattan, but "had no political conversation of the slightest importance with Mr. Grattan." "He did not recollect being at Tinnahinch in company with any other person shortly after." But immediately after his return to Newgate he wrote a letter to the lord chancellor, correcting his evidence on this point, and stated that he recollected having been at Tinnahinch in the company of Hughes. In Lord Edward's several places of concealment he was frequently visited by Neilson,[1] and at one of these especially which had hitherto been unnoticed, the house of Mr. Bartholomew Gannon, a linen-draper, 22, Corn-market, where, on his removal from Moore's in Thomas-street,

[1] During the two months of Lord Edward's concealment in Dublin, Neilson was actively engaged in bringing intelligence of the movements of government to his lordship, conveying his instructions to the different leaders in the city and its vicinity, and in attending various committees, and in communicating with various delegates from the north. One of these northern delegates was John Hughes, a bookseller of Belfast, of whom I have given some account in a former volume, and who remained unsuspected by any of his associates for some time subsequently to the arrests of Lord Edward and Neilson, although then, and long previously, a government informer.—R. R. M.

he remained for some days. I am informed by the daughter of Moore (Mrs. M'Cready) that it was at Gannon's she last saw Lord Edward. This lady states that when his lordship was concealed at her father's Neilson's visits were frequent there, and they appeared to give his lordship more pleasure than those of any other of his associates; that at times his spirits seemed weighed down, but, to use the words of this lady, "the moment Neilson made his appearance Lord Edward appeared like a new man; his features brightened up, and he spoke with all his natural vivacity." There were few persons living in 1843 who had better opportunities of forming an opinion of the estimation in which Lord Edward held his different associates than this lady, and on her authority I am able to state that Lord Edward habitually spoke of Neilson as of one in whose energy, boldness, and honesty he could place entire trust. Neilson's qualities, no doubt, were too congenial to his own to fail of securing his esteem for Neilson; but it would be a folly to deny that the habits contracted during his imprisonment were not calculated to enable him to cope with the difficulties or to obviate the dangers with which his situation was surrounded. If Neilson was deficient, like some other of his associates, in caution, there was a want of energy on the part of other leaders no less injurious to their cause.

The conflicting efforts, however, of the directory to repress or to inspirit their followers, as the occasion seemed to require, had the effect of neutralizing the objects of the society, and kept them vibrating at intermediate points between the positive and negative qualities of ardour and inactivity, and the result of the influence thus exerted was to paralyze their enterprize. In estimating the conduct of Neilson subsequently to the arrests at Bond's, the desperate circumstances of the society are to be taken into account. Success or failure in similar circumstances usually stamps the character of intrepidity or rashness on the movements of the actors in the struggle. While we admit the imprudence of Neilson's frequent visits to Lord Edward, of his night excursions with his lordship to make their preparatory disposition of the attack on the capital, of the meditated liberation of the prisoners, the act of reconnoitring one of the gaols—to the officers of which his person must have been familiar—we must bear in mind that our opinion is formed of these matters after the event, and when the issue of them had proved unfortunate.

The question of their legal criminality, whatever might have been the result, admits of no doubt. The consequences of Neilson's last unfortunate visit to Lord Edward were hardly less fatal to the latter than they were destined to

prove injurious for a time to the fame of Neilson. Truth, however, ultimately triumphs over all injustice.

The details of Lord Edward's arrest are too well known to need repetition. It is sufficient to say that Neilson visited him at Murphy's on the 19th of May, saw a party of soldiers pass up the street about the middle of the day, and gave notice of their appearance. He dined at Murphy's in company with Lord Edward, and after the cloth was removed, as if suddenly recollecting himself, hurried out of the room and left the house. By Murphy's account he was absent about an hour when Major Sirr and his party, finding the door open by which Neilson had gone out, entered the house, and, after a desperate struggle, effected the capture of the best, the noblest, the bravest of his band. Lord Edward's arrest following so immediately Neilson's exit, his restlessness during dinner, his "fidgetty" demeanour at the moment of leaving the house, and the strange circumstance of the door being found open by Major Sirr, were circumstances that caused Neilson's conduct to be freely canvassed; and those who were in the secret of the treachery which really led to the capture of the prisoner took care to let suspicion light and rest on those whom it was thought desirable to bring into odium with their own party. Neilson and Murphy were made the

scape-goats of the infamy of the memorable F. H., whose initials have been recently identified with the name of Francis Higgins, one of the worst men of the worst period in our history.

With respect to Neilson, Mr. Moore, in a note appended to his account of the arrest of Lord Edward, has stated that "some share of the suspicion of having betrayed Lord Edward attaches to this man" (Neilson); but Moore has also stated the reasons that he deemed sufficient "to absolve Neilson from any such suspicion;" [1] and in a later edition of his work he has still more fully expressed his conviction of Neilson's innocence of the charge that had been brought against him. The mere existence, however, of such a suspicion at any period, and the length of time that had elapsed (upwards of forty-three years) before any light had been thrown on the mystery in which the matter had been involved, had left traces of the doubts which were originally raised on insufficient grounds, and had been recently sought to be removed by inference drawn from character, in the absence of certain proof of the unfounded nature of those suspicions.

[1] Moore's "Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald," ed. 1831, vol. ii., p. 86.

CHAPTER IV

NEILSON'S SECOND ARREST

THE general rising which had been so often postponed for various reasons was at last fixed for the 23rd of May. Lord Edward Fitzgerald had planned all the military operations. He was looked upon as the leader who, once having joined the men of Leinster, was to have sent forth his orders to the committees of the different counties for the people to rise *en masse*. His arrest on the 19th, then, was the greatest blow which could have fallen on his cause. On the 21st, Henry and John Sheares were arrested, and no Leinster leaders of any eminence then remained at large.

Neilson, seeing all these calamities, determined that on the night of the 23rd he would make an effort to liberate the leaders, and hazard all hopes of success on an attack on Newgate, where Lord Edward was confined.

From his long confinement in the Dublin prisons he had become intimately acquainted with their interior arrangement and construction, and so far was qualified to carry the proposed plan of attack into execution.

But to the success of that effort it was necessary to ascertain the height of the walls of the prison at that part where they were to be scaled;[1] and to obtain this knowledge with accuracy he boldly and, as the result proved, most imprudently determined to reconnoitre the prison; and while he was intently engaged in estimating the height of the building, from the number of tier of mason work in the wall, he was observed by Gregg, the gaoler, who, calling a file of soldiers to his assistance, immediately seized on Neilson, and, after a desperate struggle on the part of the latter, lodged him in gaol.

It was only the day previously to Neilson's arrest that a proclamation, dated the 22nd of May, was issued, offering a reward of £300 for the apprehension of each of the following persons, charged with high treason—viz., Samuel Neilson of Belfast, merchant; Richard M'Cormick, poplin and stuff manufacturer; John Chambers, printer; Edward Rattigan, timber merchant; John Cormick, feather merchant; William Lawless, surgeon; Thomas Trevor, ship-owner; and Michael Reynolds, of Naas, in the county of Kildare. Mr. Grattan states, "When Neilson was taken, his clothes were torn

[1] This account of his intended mode of attack was given by Neilson to his family, but as to the fact of his having scaling ladders in readiness, we have no information on that point.

off him, his body wounded all over by the soldiers hacking at him, he was cut and scarred in upwards of fifty places, and was only saved by the number of his assailants." [1]

Neilson's arrest prevented the meditated attack on the prison. A large number of persons had assembled according to his appointment in the Barley-fields, where Mountjoy-square now stands, early in the evening; but as Neilson did not return to them they dispersed without making any further attempt.

In planning this attack on the prison, and determining in favour of it, Neilson evidently had the effects of the capture of the Bastile in recollection, and had determined on following the course which had proved successful at the outbreak of the French revolution.

This plan, it is to be remembered, was essential to the objects which Lord Edward had in view, and which would have been completely frustrated if the leaders whose co-operation was required had remained in the hands of government; and thus the seizure of persons of distinction, whom it was intended to detain as hostages, would be of no advantage to the in-

[1] When S. N. was seized by Gregg and a corporal's guard, a gentleman was passing. S. N. pulled a parcel of papers out of his pocket, and handing them to the gentleman said, "Sir, I know you to be a magistrate; do not suffer me to be pillaged by these miscreants." The gentleman, whom he never saw before, took them, and evidently understood the *ruse*.

surgents. Before Lord Edward's arrest Neilson had formed a plan for attacking Kilmainham gaol, where the other state prisoners were confined, as referred to in the letter which John Sheares had written to dissuade him from it. What the nature of that plan was we have no data to determine. Neilson states that the writer of that letter was not aware of his plans when he wrote to him.

On the 11th of June Samuel Neilson received notice for trial. On the 26th of June bills of indictment were sent up for high treason against Samuel Neilson, the two Sheares, John M'Cann, William Michael Byrne, and Oliver Bond. These persons were brought into court, and bills were found against them, and they were desired to name such counsel and agents as they chose to be assigned to them. Council and agents were accordingly named by all the prisoners, except by Neilson, who refused to name any. Mr. Grattan, in his memoirs of his father, has given a graphic description of Neilson's demeanour on this occasion:

When brought into the court, the noise of his entrance was like the march of men in irons. He was called on to plead, and asked if he had anything to say; he replied in a stentorian voice, "No! I have been robbed of everything—I could not fee counsel; my property—everything has been taken from me;" and he turned away. But he came again to the front of

the dock, and said, "For myself I have nothing to say; I scorn your power, and despise that authority that it shall ever be my pride to have opposed; but I may say—not that I value it—why am I kept with these weighty irons on me, so heavy that three ordinary men could scarcely carry them? Is it your law that I should be placed in irons, and in such irons?

Lord Carleton, who was one of the judges, called on the gaoler (Gregg) to account for this: he said, "It is true, my lord, he is in irons, and in such irons as I would not think of putting on any two men; but it was necessary—my life was attempted—I was not safe."

Neilson interrupted him. "Your life! I scorned to take it. I did not resist till I was nearly torn in pieces, and in defence of myself I resisted; I would scorn to take your life." And he looked at Gregg with savage contempt.

He refused to engage counsel to defend him; his trial, however, did not come on, and ultimately he was included in the list of exiles who went into banishment.

Curran, who had undertaken his defence, went to see him in prison. "He was loaded with chains, but his mind was firm and undaunted, and his spirits as buoyant as in the days of prosperity; fear never entered into his composition."

All the prisoners indicted on the 11th of June, with the exception of Neilson, were put on their trial and capitally convicted; and all of those tried, with the exception of Bond, were exe-

cuted. The dates of those trials and executions are deserving of particular attention, bearing, as most of them do, on the history of the compact entered into between the state prisoners and the government, a transaction of great importance, whether as regarded its contemplated object, its consequences, or the characters of those who were parties to it. The papers of three of the state prisoners who were principally connected with it have been placed in my hands by their surviving relatives, and I am thus enabled to give a detailed account of that transaction, drawn up at the time by each of them, far more comprehensive and circumstantial than any that has hitherto appeared. On the 12th of July, 1798, Henry and John Sheares were tried, and executed on the 14th. On the 17th of July, John M'Cann was tried, and executed on the 19th. William Michael Byrne was tried on the 20th of July, and was executed on the 28th. Oliver Bond was tried on the 23rd of July, and capitally convicted, and was respited on the 26th.

Neilson states that the first proposal to enter into terms with government was made to him by his attorney, Crawford, "the middle of July." The proposal was taken into consideration by Neilson, and on the 22nd of July, Mr. Dobbs, a member of the Irish parliament, took on himself the office of mediator between the

government and the prisoners, and entered into negotiation with Neilson on their part. On the following day, the 23rd of July, Mr. Dobbs communicated with Lord Castlereagh, and his lordship said, before anything was determined on, "the result of Bond's trial must be first known."

On the 27th of July, a government official, Mr. Alexander, communicated with Bond, and undertook, at his desire, to ascertain at the Castle how the proposal would be received; and at his suggestion Neilson drew up a paper stipulating for the lives of Byrne and Bond; and on that day Mr. Dobbs and the sheriffs went round the prisons and got the names of several of the prisoners to it. The day following, Byrne was executed, pending the negotiation. The reason given for Byrne's execution was that all the prisoners had not signed the agreement. Arthur O'Connor states that he was applied to on the 24th by Mr. Dobbs and one of the sheriffs, who brought the agreement signed to him by seventy of the state prisoners, and for reasons fully detailed in his letter to Lord Castlereagh he refused to sign it. On the 28th the order was received at the prison for Bond's execution on the day following; and the same day, at the instance of Neilson, the negotiation, which was considered virtually annulled by the execution of Byrne, was again re-

newed, with the view principally on the part of Neilson of saving the life of his friend Bond, and with a full expectation on the part of the other prisoners of putting a total stop to the effusion of blood. The agreement was again taken round the prisons, and received the signatures of all of them, with the exception of Roger O'Connor and William Dowdall.

In a matter of such moment to the characters of all the parties concerned in this transaction, I confine myself to a bare statement of facts, and the exhibition of documents of unquestionable authenticity, from which the reader will draw his own inferences.

The following statement was drawn up by Samuel Neilson, in Fort George, and was given by him to a lady of the name of Risk, to be delivered to his family: it was sewed up in her under-dress to avoid discovery, and was thus conveyed to Mrs. Neilson:

The subscriber (lying, as he is, in the power of a government whose treatment of him for the eight years past leads him to be prepared for the worst at their hands) feels it his duty to leave behind him, in case of death or perpetual banishment, an abridged record of the principal facts which relate to the negotiation of 1798 between the state prisoners and government, in order that his friends and countrymen may have the necessary materials whereon to form their judgment respecting that transaction in which he was the first mover.

His own peculiar persecutions previous to this period

would furnish materials for a volume. He passes them over, because he never wishes to be in the front ground upon paper.

The transactions which immediately preceded and led to the insurrection of the 23rd of May he declines stating at present, for reasons that are obvious. He will only say that its failure, as is customary on every such occasion, has enabled the voice of slander to condemn it, whilst the principal planner and many of his coadjutors are, alas! no more. They have died for their country; and he hopes yet to assist in recovering their memories from the imputations of pretended friends, who had abandoned Ireland in this time of her utmost need.

It is necessary to state how he himself stood at the commencement of the negotiations. He had been served with a copy of the indictment; he had been brought up from his cell in irons to have counsel assigned; he refused to name any, lest he might, in any degree, give his concurrence to the transactions of a court which, he said, "he looked upon as a sanguinary tribunal for conviction and death, and not for trial"; stating further, "that to him it appeared that justice had slid off her base, which had been taken possession of by brutal force." . . . He was afterwards brought up and arraigned; next day his cell was searched, and the outline of the defence he intended to make was found concealed under a flag, and carried off in triumph to the Castle. It went on the ground of justification, expressed in the strongest manner he could find language for, and proposed to plead guilty to every count in the indictment, provided they would expunge the obnoxious appellations. His trial was immediately put off, *sine die,* and a few days after

he was again brought up, when, at the pressing request of his friends, particularly of Mr. Curran, he acquiesced in the nomination of counsel and agent, who had immediate access to him in consequence; and one and all assured him that, so far as they could learn, there was not evidence to be adduced against him that could in any way affect his life. This he states in order to satisfy every person that his own case had no concern whatever in the transaction.

Those who know him best will readily give him credit when he says that the failure of the insurrection, and the daily execution of his virtuous friends in town and country, martyrs to the same cause, had, so far from creating a terror of death, actually made life a burthen to him. He further declares that, so far as he knows, there was not a prisoner who took part in this measure but was actuated chiefly, if not solely, by considerations of a nature far from selfish or personal: by far the greater part of them were, and had long been, imprisoned merely on suspicion; nor was there any idea whatever of bringing them to trial at that or at any other time.

NEILSON'S NARRATIVE OF FACTS IN RELATION TO THE COMPACT.

Mr. Crawford, the attorney who was appointed my agent, had access to my cell from the middle of July. He made me acquainted with the state of the country, and from him I learned the entire failure of the insurrection. He told me of the unavailing resistance which was still made in some districts, and the consequent spilling of blood. He saw that I was sensibly affected by his statements, and he proposed to me the idea of

communicating with government on the means of restoring tranquillity. I was very distrustful of government, and hesitated for several days. He at length told me he had reason to believe that the proposition would be met half way, and that he was convinced Lord Charlemont (whose honour was unimpeached) would undertake to obtain a satisfactory guarantee to whatever terms might be agreed upon. I rather yielded to the proposition, and gave him permission to wait on Lord Charlemont accordingly.

In the meantime I wrote a note to Arthur O'Connor, then confined in Bridewell, with which prison I happened to have the means of communicating, stating the outline of the proposed plan. He immediately replied to me in warm terms of approbation; but from an expression in his note it appeared that he had not concurred to the full extent of the idea. I immediately explained to him in a second note, and stated my opinion precisely and to the extent afterwards adopted. To this I received a reply rather hesitating. On the 22nd I again saw Mr. Crawford; he told me that Lord Charlemont highly approved of the measure, but from his age and infirmity declined taking an active part in the business himself; but that Mr. Dobbs, his friend, would cheerfully undertake to conduct the negotiation. I readily acquiesced, as I had long known Mr. Dobbs, and had a high opinion of his integrity. The executions were going on rapidly under the commission then sitting; Byrne was under sentence of death, and Bond was to be tried the next day: of course no time was to be lost. I empowered Mr. Crawford to call immediately on Mr. Dobbs, and desire him to communicate with government on the subject. Mr. Dobbs did not see Lord Castlereagh until next morn-

ing, the 23rd, at half-past ten o'clock. At this time Bond's trial had commenced, and he (Mr. Dobbs) was told that the result of the trial must be known in the first instance. Bond was condemned on the following morning, a necessary consequence of accusation before a tribunal when the law of treason was so extended as to embrace the population of the land, and whose juries were sanguinary Orangemen. He was conducted to Newgate, the same prison in which I was. I testified to the turnkey an anxious wish to see my old and intimate friend previous to his death.

This wish found its way to Sheriff Pasley, who, actuated by motives of humanity, ventured to take me to the place where Byrne and Bond were confined. I then met the other sheriff and Mr. Alexander from the Castle, who, being a relation of Bond's, and probably having known of the communication through Mr. Dobbs, had called to see him. I asked Bond if he had heard anything upon the subject: neither he nor Byrne knew anything of it. I stated the plan and its object in a few words; every person present approved of it. Bond and Byrne gave it their approbation as tending to stop the general effusion of blood, but insisted that their own particular cases should not be considered as of any importance in the general question. I was requested by Mr. Alexander to put it into writing. Bond proposed that Mr. Alexander should first inquire at the Castle how the measure would be received: this proposal was immediately embraced by Mr. Alexander, and he left us. On his return he spoke rather ambiguously, but recommended it to us still to put our thoughts on paper. I then drew up the first paper, which included the names of Bond and Byrne, which was approved of by govern-

ment; and Mr. Dobbs, with the sheriffs, went round the different prisons with it for signatures, by the desire of government. Notwithstanding this, Byrne was executed the next day!

On the 26th Mr. Dobbs called upon us after Bond's respite, and said that though most of the prisoners had signed yet some had refused, and that government held it essential that *all* should sign. Mr. Cooke came to us and fully confirmed Mr. Dobbs's statement, and excusing Byrne's execution on that account. He also told me I had liberty to go with Mr. Dobbs to the other prisons and converse with those who hesitated. I accordingly accompanied him to Bridewell, when I succeeded in obtaining the signatures required. That evening Mr. Dobbs met Lord Castlereagh and found, to his astonishment, that some new difficulties were thrown in the way.

On Saturday, the 28th, Mr. Dobbs brought us a message from the Castle, that the original terms would not be adhered to by government unless the prisoners would agree to give up the names of their associates, &c. This second breach of a solemn agreement astonished us, but the ignominious proposal still more. I was again allowed to go round to the prisoners to consult with them, and we returned an unanimous expression of abhorrence at the proposal. This most extraordinary message induced in the prisoners a belief that some unprincipled and bloody man assumed the name and authority of government, and that an immediate communication with the lord lieutenant himself, by a delegation from the prisons, might do away the misunderstanding. This proposal was acceded to by government,

with only this difference, that our delegates were to meet the ministers instead of the lord lieutenant, and the prisoners of Bridewell nominated A. O'Connor; those of Kilmainham, Emmet and Macneven, which was confirmed by the prisoners in Newgate. They accordingly met the lord chancellor, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Cooke on Sunday, the 29th, when a new agreement, upon the same principles with the original one, was finally and solemnly entered into. One reason with me for proposing Macneven and O'Connor to go on this mission was, that Bond and I understood, in a conversation we had with Mr. Cooke at Newgate, that they were two of the persons government wished particularly to examine. O'Connor did not sign the original agreement until after Byrne's execution and Bond's respite.

The following is a copy of the agreement finally arranged on the 29th of July:

That the undersigned state prisoners in the three prisons of Newgate, Kilmainham, and Bridewell, engage to give every information in their power of the whole of the internal transactions of the U. Irishmen; and that each of them shall give detailed information of everything that has passed between the U. I. and foreign states; but that the prisoners are not, by naming or describing, to implicate any person whatever, and that they are ready to emigrate to such country as shall be agreed upon between them and government, and give security not to return to this country without the permission of government, and not to pass into any enemy's country: if, on so doing, they are to be freed from prosecution, and also Mr. Bond be permitted to take

the benefit of this proposal. The state prisoners also hope that it may be extended to such persons in custody, or not in custody, as may choose to benefit by it.

Dublin, 29th July, 1798.

The last clause, which is in fact the *spirit* of the agreement, was intentionally worded in this loose manner at the instance of government, to save appearances on their side; for it was particularly and expressly conditioned and settled that government was pledged to this point; and upon its being desired to have the particular expression more precise, the chancellor said, "It comes to this—either you must trust us or we must trust you. A government which could violate engagements thus solemnly made, neither could stand, nor deserved to stand." Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Cooke concurred, and declared, in the strongest manner, that the whole of what had been agreed upon should be adhered to with the utmost liberality and good faith on the part of government.

Before I proceed to state the fidelity with which this engagement was fulfilled on our part, I think it right to give my opinion of its amount; an opinion which experience has proved to have been right. It was then to the government (if they had availed themselves of it with liberality and good faith) present tranquillity. It was to the union salvation. So our enemies very soon understood it, as will hereafter appear by their conduct; but this can be no excuse for their violation of all faith. If they acquired nothing from our disclosure which they did not know before, that is nothing to the question with them, though much to our countrymen. It is

nothing against us that an open avowal of the truth was neither more nor less than a complete justification of the union.

On the evening of the same day when the agreement was finally concluded at the Castle, Lord Castlereagh told Messrs. O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven, that he expected they would draw up and present in writing an account of the rise, progress, and proceedings of the United Irishmen, together with their connections with foreign states; and that such account should be considered as a full and complete accomplishment of the compact on the part of the union. This demand was, after some hesitation, agreed to by them; and they accordingly drew up and presented a memoir of the union (detailing its origin, plans, and proceedings), signed by each, and dated the 4th of August, 1798.

On the 6th of August, Mr. Cooke called at Kilmainham, where Emmet and Macneven were confined, and said Lord Cornwallis had read the memoir, but could not receive it without being altered; at the same time producing it as if to return to them.

They asked him whether it was not a performance on their part of the agreement with government? He confessed it was, but said it was so written as to be a justification of the United Irishmen. They answered that it would be impossible for them to write any statement of their transactions that would not be a justification of that body. He then said, "I suppose if government were to publish part of this memoir, you would publish the remainder." They answered, "Most probably we should." "Then," said he, "we should be obliged to hire some person to answer it; you would re-

ply to him; and so a paper war would be carried on between you and us." After a good deal of conversation to the same effect, they told him they could give him no decisive answer as to any alteration, until they were all together (O'Connor being then in Bridewell); but in the meantime, out of respect to his excellency, they would look over the memoir, but confessed there was no part of it which they thought could be altered. Mr. Cooke then took his leave, carrying along with him the copy which he had brought. Next morning Mr. O'Connor was permitted to go from Bridewell to Kilmainham, in order to confer with the others; but just as they were about to sit down and look over the memoir, Macneven received a note from Mr. Cooke, informing him that in consequence of the conversation of yesterday, he would be examined that day, at two o'clock, before the committee of the Lords. Thus government contrived a mode of giving, under parliamentary sanction, such evidence as they should think proper to garble and select from such of the prisoners as they examined; and here will be seen a clue to all the misrepresentations of evidence and facts which remain uncontradicted, because these prisoners were in close custody, and they are kept in close custody lest they should be contradicted.

Nearly two weeks had elapsed after the agreement was concluded, during which we in Newgate read accounts daily of murders and other cruelties committed in Wicklow—where a body under Holt still held out—and elsewhere, chiefly by the yeomen; we also understood that some courts-martial were still proceeding on the trials of those concerned, or suspected of being concerned, in

the late insurrection. In short, while our friends were suffering on the one hand, government on the other had not availed itself of the measure to pacify the country. Bond and I complained of this to Mr. Alexander, who occasionally called to see him, and he, after stating at the Castle what we said, desired us to commit our thoughts to paper, and they would be taken into consideration. We immediately forwarded the following suggestion to Mr. Cooke:

"It is to be premised that all communications on the present state of the country are to be confidential, explicit, and calculated to restore harmony, by concessions on the part of government and obedience on the part of the people.

"First, then, we are of opinion that, in order to tranquillize the public mind, there should be an immediate and universal amnesty, together with general liberation of the prisoners in the different gaols and tenders who are charged with treason or treasonable practices—government pointing out such excepted persons as they wish to leave the country, and who may prefer emigration to imprisonment or trial.

"We think this step will so prepossess the people in favour of Lord Cornwallis's government, that they will cheerfully listen to any proposals which may be made for the restoration and continuance not only of tranquillity but mutual confidence.

"With respect to the persons who may be chiefly instrumental in the different counties to effectuate this desirable object, we think an immediate correspondence should be opened with them by such prisoners as approve of this measure and will voluntarily assist in it.

We, on our part, are willing to do everything in our power to carry it into effect.

(Signed) "OLIVER BOND
"SAMUEL NEILSON.

"New Prison, 8th August, 1798."

Two or three days after this had been sent to the Castle, Mr. Dobbs called upon us, and showed upon this as indeed upon every other occasion, his ardent desire to co-operate in every plan that could be suggested to put a stop to bloodshed and cruelty. He had been conversing with some confidential person at the Castle upon the subject, and proposed our sending down some persons to Wicklow, whose character would gain them credit with the insurgents who still held out.

We acceded to the proposal, and promised to look out for two gentlemen of the description he mentioned, but stated that in the first place we must have for them the most explicit and absolute protections; and, in the next place, unconditional pardons for such insurgents as they would bring in. To this Mr. Dobbs not only acceded, but philanthropically proposed that he himself would set off with them the moment he got the necessary papers and letters from the government to General Moore, who commanded in the disturbed district.

The mission had the desired effect; vast numbers came in, and the Orange persecution was completely put a stop to for that time in that country. Here it is necessary to say, that there did appear, from the completion of the negotiation down to about the middle of August, or even later, a disposition on the part of government to act with, at least, tolerable fairness and honour respect-

ing the spirit of our agreement; but towards the end of that month they began to forget both the spirit and letter of it, and went on so to do until the final abandonment of every shadow of honour, truth, and justice. I must also say, that however unjustifiable such a breach of the most solemn engagement is, I am led, from a great variety of circumstances, to impute it more to my intemperate and bloodthirsty countrymen of the Orange faction, than to the English government; for on the 18th of August, Mr. Cooke brought us a message that government were fully satisfied we had acted with good faith, and they were ready to act honourably on their part, and of course we were at liberty to go where we pleased, provided we left the British dominions; and that the only thing now to be settled was, the nature of the accommodation we wished for in order to settle our affairs; some were ready to go promptly, and some required a short time to dispose of their effects and prepare themselves for an eternal adieu to Ireland.

In the interim the whole newspapers of the capital opened with the most barefaced and unqualified abuse of us, one and all. The grossest falsehoods were published under the title of evidence given by us before the secret committee of the Lords and Commons; and on the first attempt, by an advertisement, to repel these falsehoods, we were all put once more into solitary confinement, and strangers forbidden access to us. This advertisement was as follows:

"Having read in the different newspapers publications pretending to be abstracts of the report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, and of our depositions before the committees of Lords and Commons we feel ourselves called upon to assure the public

that they are gross, and, to us, astonishing misrepresentations, not only unsupported by, but in many instances directly contradictory to, the facts we really stated on these occasions. We further assure our friends, that in no instance did the name of any individual escape from us; on the contrary, we always refused answering such questions as might tend to implicate any persons whatever, conformably to the agreement entered into by the state prisoners with government.

(Signed) "ARTHUR O'CONNOR.
"THOS. ADDIS EMMET.
"WM. JAS. MACNEVEN."

My name would have appeared in this advertisement also, if the gentleman who had it could have got access to the prison in which I was, for I had the same cause of complaint, though little hopes of contesting with government at that time in the Irish press. Our real examinations, which had taken place before the committees of the Lords and Commons, are in the hands of our friends; mine, which is in the hands of ————, was as follows:

EXAMINATION OF S. NEILSON.

9th August, 1798.

Is an United Irishman, has been so since the year 1791; was early and active in promoting the organization; was a member of the Dublin and Belfast first societies. That of Dublin had no concern whatever in commencing the organization; the meetings of both had ceased previous to the commencement of the latter: does not precisely recollect the period when the organization, as at present established, had its first beginning,

but thinks it was very soon after government issued their proclamation against the Volunteers in 1793. It commenced among some junior societies in Belfast, without any connection with or countenance from the original societies of 1791; the first society of Belfast, however, afterwards adopted the system, without any communication with the society in Dublin, or any persons of any persuasion in that place; on the contrary, it was very slowly they came into the measure, and not until the province of Ulster was completely organized. The system was completed in the summer of 1795, and it had spread very little in or about Dublin till the winter 1796-7. The original object was solely that contained in the test—namely, equality of representation, without distinction on account of religion; the ideas of a republic and separation grew out of the severities practised by government upon the people; is positive that the measures of government induced the people to despair of any reform through the constituted authorities, and to look abroad for aid.

Has heard of a letter of an early date written by Mr. Tone on this subject; does not speak of Mr. Tone's opinion at any period, but of the public mind, and is positive that the only object of the union at first was as before stated; latterly, a separation from England and a republic were the universal objects. There was early an idea of alarming government into a reform, but that hope had been long abandoned.

Knew that there were communications held abroad—not, however, of himself, but from those in whom he could confide; knew nothing of any agent at Lisle, but has no doubt of there being a resident agent at Paris. Knew Lord Edward Fitzgerald; does not think

he was extremely confident of an invasion: his reason for this opinion is, that he would have laboured more assiduously to persuade the people to suffer on rather than resist; besides, often heard him express a desire that Ireland should accomplish her own liberation, rather than owe it to a foreign power. Does think France will invade these countries; cannot tell how they will act if they succeed; does not think they will use it as a conquered country; thinks they may act as they have done in other countries.

Was liberated in January or February last, on condition he would not become a member of any treasonable committee; took no part whatever after that in politics previous to the arrests at Mr. Bond's, when he understood he was again to be cast into prison if he could be found; after that was very active in procuring the vacancies to be filled up which that day's arrests might have occasioned; attended several committees belonging to the union; delivered some messages from Lord Edward Fitzgerald; was, together with his lordship, stopped by a patrol near Palmerstown, and liberated, after being a short time in custody, owing to the ignorance of the officer respecting our persons; has spoken thus freely of his lordship because he is no more; but this moment it occurs to me that his family may by possibility be injured, though he cannot; I will not therefore answer any other question respecting him. [Here an altercation took place between Lord Dillon and S. N., the former insisting on having an answer to every question, the latter warmly refusing to answer any that might implicate any person whatever: the lord chancellor interfering, said, "Do you know, sir, where you are?" S. N. replied, "I do know where I am; I know

you may send me back either to my cell or to the scaffold—I am indifferent; but I will answer no question tending to implicate any person."] There was a letter found in his (Neilson's) pocket, signed "I. S."—he cannot say positively who wrote it; the object of it was to dissuade him from an enterprise against Kilmainham prison, but the author laboured under a mistake when he wrote it; there was an intention of attacking Newgate on the night of the 23rd of May; a principal end in view was the liberation of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; was in no official situation that night further than to give every advice and assistance, where either might be thought necessary; does not know of any intimacy between Lord Edward and the Sheareses.

Does not think any numbers were compelled to become United Irishmen, but thinks many joined the union because they thought it the strongest side; thinks it was the strongest side; thinks had their affairs been well managed they would have succeeded; cannot well account for the failure, but supposes they had a great loss in the imprisonment and absence of many of their leaders.

Was often at the Dargle and Tinnahinch, sometimes alone and sometimes in company; recollects being there in the spring of 1798 in company with Mr. Bond and Mr. Sweetman; saw Mr. Grattan that day, who obligingly accompanied us through the Dargle; had no political conversation of the slightest importance with Mr. G.; is certain not one word respecting the union; does not recollect being there in company with any other person shortly after; cannot recollect; may have, some time or other, spoken to Mr. Grattan on the subject of the union, as he has done to any other public man

who did not belong to the body, but is convinced that Mr. Grattan never had any the slightest connection with the affairs of the union; but though Mr. Grattan cannot be implicated, he must again put a stop to this kind of interrogatory, for other names may be mentioned, and his refusal to answer them would naturally lead to suspicion at least.

Thinks government have latterly obtained some very correct information respecting the union, but in general their information must have been exceedingly inaccurate. He has formed this opinion from various facts, but particularly from the nature of their arrests and prosecutions. Thinks no more arrests necessary to restore quiet, but the system of lenity should be much farther extended, and the protections made absolute; thinks, also, that a radical change should take place in the magistracy. S. N. was then retiring, when Lord Kilwarden rose and said: "Mr. Neilson, one moment. Were you to be consulted as to the best means of quieting the country and keeping it quiet, how would you advise?" "My lord, I am glad you asked that question, for it gives me an opportunity of giving a last opinion respecting the country I so much love. I say, then (and I speak from a knowledge of the people as well as a feeling of their sufferings), to rule this country in quiet you must complete the amnesty: in a word, you must govern by public opinion, and not by force."

A few minutes after my return to Newgate, I recollected having been at Tinnahinch in the company of Hughes, and I wrote a note to the chancellor, stating it.

(Signed) S. NEILSON.

Barnacle Lodge.

This evidence, when compared with that published by the committees in their secret report, will show in the strongest light the enormity of those falsehoods hitherto passed upon the world as the real expressions which had dropped from us.

During the prevalence of these mis-statements, and whilst my mind was ill at ease on account of the impossibility of publishing a refutation of them, I met on a sudden with one of the greatest calamities that can befall man. In a moment, and without the slightest previous illness, Bond, my intimate and much-loved friend, whose fate had been so deeply interwoven in all these transactions—Bond, then my bed-fellow and partner in mind—fell down and expired. This fatal catastrophe happened on the morning of the 6th of September. I was at once overwhelmed with the most profound grief. It was not the loss of a common acquaintance, nor that of a patriot of a few months' standing which I had to deplore; but the loss of a man with whom the closest intimacy for seventeen years had grown into the sincerest friendship. Bond was a patriot whose devotion to liberty was coeval with his manhood; whose understanding was as sound as his integrity was inflexible; and whose early, useful, and active labours in the cause will be recounted with exultation by his children, and remembered with gratitude by his country, when those of ephemeral patriotism shall have passed away with its professors.

I betook myself to the utmost privacy, and really grew sick of the society of man; my fellow-prisoners exerted themselves to soothe my sorrow, and had in some degree succeeded, when a new and unexpected vexation occurred: it was as follows:

On the 11th of September, I happened to see "The Courier" (London newspaper) of the 6th of that month, containing a copy of an act of parliament then stated to be on its way through the Irish House of Commons. This was the bill which is now the law respecting us who had entered into the agreement with government, and this London publication was the first notice we ever had of the measure—a fact well worthy the reflection of those who did not know the state of the Irish capital, the Irish press, and the Irish legislature, at this time. I immediately determined upon contradicting the false preamble of the bill, and wrote the following letter to the editor of "The Courier" for that purpose:

"Sir—Having seen in your paper of the 6th instant a publication purporting to be a copy of the bill now on its way through the Irish parliament, relative to the emigration of ninety persons in custody under charges of high treason—which states that they had acknowledged their crimes, retracted their opinions, and implored pardon—I think myself peculiarly called upon to set you right, by enclosing you a copy of the compact as settled between us and the government, which cannot by any means authorize such a statement.

"None of us, so far as I know, did either acknowledge a crime, retract an opinion, or implore pardon. Our object was to stop the effusion of blood.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"SAMUEL NEILSON.

"New Prison, Dublin, 12 September, 1798."

On the morning of the 12th, I enclosed a copy of this letter, together with "The Courier," in the following note to Lord Castlereagh:

"My Lord—Feeling, in common with my fellow-prisoners, extremely hurt at a publication which tends to brand our names with infamy, I think it incumbent on me, who commenced the negotiation, to justify our characters and motives by setting the whole in a true point of view. At the same time wishing to pay all due respect to government, I trouble you with a copy of a letter which I mean to send off by this night's mail. I also take the liberty of sending the newspaper with the offensive passages underscored.

"I am, my lord, your lordship's most obedient servant,

"SAMUEL NEILSON."

About one o'clock on the same day, Mr. Cooke, accompanied by Mr. Marsden, called upon me at Newgate. He held both letters and newspaper in his hand, and began by asking me rather freely, "if I had lost my senses in taking such a step." "No, sir," said I, "though I understand your newspapers have taken my judgment from me some time ago, yet I feel I am in perfect possession of it." "But seriously, Mr. N., do you intend to publish this contradiction to the act of parliament?" "I do, indeed, provided you do not assure me that that is an erroneous statement of the bill (pointing to "The Courier," then in his hand). Upon this he opened the paper, said he had not read it, and, handing it to me, desired me to read the offensive paragraphs. I did so, and pressed it upon him that they were false, inasmuch as we had neither confessed crimes, retracted opinions, nor implored pardon.

He evaded the falsehoods, did not deny but that the bill was fairly reported, and endeavoured to justify it. I urged to him in reply the disgrace that would here-

after attach to the legislature, when it would be known to the world that they had passed an act founded upon falsehood—supposing the prisoners' reputation totally out of the question. Mr. Marsden, in answer, laboured much to show me that a legislative falsehood might not be inconsistent with abstract moral truth. His argument did not weigh with me, and I again stated that it was impossible to permit such a proceeding to pass to the world and to posterity uncontradicted. "Then," said Mr. Cooke, "you are determined to publish?" I told him I was. "I am to inform you, then, that I am desired by his excellency the lord lieutenant to say, that your doing so will be considered as a breach of the contract, and the executions will go on as formerly." "Why, sir, as to executions, I have my mind made up; I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than permit such a false statement to be thus solemnly recorded." "Do you know, sir," said he in a menacing tone, "that we can execute you without much difficulty?" "I do, sir; I know your will is law, and to save you trouble, I would prefer you giving orders to Gregg (the gaoler) this instant to hang me out of the door, than acquiesce in such an abominable measure." "Oh! sir, I see what offends you—you are anxious for the reputation of the prisoners; now your mind may be and I suppose is made up, but are you sure that all your fellow-prisoners are equally determined?" "I cannot say, nor is it material, for they can by no means be implicated in this act of mine." "Indeed they are, and I assure you, if you publish a syllable on the subject, it will equally affect them all." "Then I beg you may permit my fellow-prisoners in this place to be present at the conclusion of this interview." "No," replied he (in terms

of disrespect to them which I was obliged to listen to, but shall not repeat). "Then, sir, am I authorized to say that you come express from the lord lieutenant to tell me, that my publication stating the falsehoods on which the act is founded will be considered as a breach of the treaty, and the executions will go on as formerly?" "You are, sir, if you publish at all; that is my message." I told him that I would take no further step until I consulted my fellow-prisoners. He then told me he hoped to get some of the offensive passages in the bill softened, if it had not yet passed the Lords, and left me with a promise of immediately waiting on the chancellor for that purpose. The prisoners (whom I consulted as secretly as I had an opportunity of doing), feeling that it might occasion a renewal of all the miseries of the country, which were at that time suspended at least, did not authorise me to proceed any further, nor did I think myself warranted in publishing at such a risk. I heard no more of Mr. Cooke or the chancellor, and the bill passed with all its deformity.

From this moment I saw clearly there was no confidence whatever to be placed in the pledged faith of government, and that their primary object was to blast our reputation. Having accomplished that object, however, as far as they could; and having, as it were, sent a certificate of villainy before us, I still thought they would have fulfilled one stipulation, by letting us emigrate, as had been settled; but no—if once out of their hands, some of us might find means to publish to mankind the whole of this iniquitous transaction. They did not, however, at once throw off the mask; but kept us in a cruel suspense until the 21st October, when we got notice at each of the prisons "that we might im-

mediately prepare to emigrate for America, but must give security not to return to Europe." The very next day Mr. Marsden called and told me "that some difficulties had been thrown in the way of our emigration to America by the American minister in London; but that his excellency had made such representations as, he was confident, would do away the objections."

Seven days afterwards, I received the following note:

"Mr. Marsden begs leave to inform Mr. Neilson that in consequence of the objections which have been made to sending persons from hence to America, and which Mr. M. explained to Mr. N. at their last interview, government are under the necessity of withholding permission for any of the prisoners to take their passage at present for America.

"Dublin Castle, 29th October, 1798."

To which I sent the annexed answer:

"Sir—I received your note of yesterday, stating, in substance, that we were, after being debarred Europe, also refused emigration to America.

"May I take the liberty of requesting that you will have the goodness to say if there is any country to which we may depart? If there is no such place, I must consider my imprisonment as durable as my existence, and the faith of the Irish government as worse than Punic.

"I am, Sir,

"SAMUEL NEILSON.

"New Prison, 20th October, 1798."

To this I received no reply, nor did we hear anything more on the subject until the 5th of December, when

Mr. Marsden brought us a written message, "That all the prisoners (except S. Neilson, Thomas Russell, T. A. Emmet, W. J. Macneven, Henry Jackson, Matthew Dowling, J. Sweetman, J. Cuthbert, John Sweeny, H. Wilson, Arthur O'Connor, John Chambers, Miles Duignen, John Cormick, and Deane Swift), will be permitted to retire to any neutral country on the Continent; and that a pardon would be immediately passed accordingly. His excellency (in this message) laments that change of circumstances has rendered the exception necessary; but hopes soon to do it away."

This message like all the rest, was the most tantalizing duplicity and cruelty; for most of the very indulged prisoners rot in prison at this moment; and not one, I believe, has obtained the indulgence but through some powerful and peculiar interest.

At this time, and during the whole of these transactions, the Irish press, under authority, teemed with the grossest and most abominable falsehoods, not only respecting the prisoners themselves, but also every person supposed to be connected with them in the most remote degree. The authorized perversion and falsification of their evidence, which they were not allowed to contradict, sanctioned the attacks of every annonymous pamphleteering cur, and Dublin particularly overflowed with these effusions. In one of them which happened to fall into my hands, I observed with indignation that my name and my evidence were so perverted and coupled with that of Hughes, a common informer, as to be made the foundation of the most unjust and illiberal treatment of Mr. Grattan. I endeavoured in vain to get a few lines inserted in any

Dublin paper to stop this torrent against him. At length, with much difficulty, a friend in London obtained insertion of the following in "The Courier."

"TO THE EDITOR.

"SIR—It appears to be the occupation of a certain party to calumniate the state prisoners. So far as their calumnies regard myself, I smile at them for the moment; time rolls on, and truth will one day be heard. In the meantime, however, I am particularly called upon, in vindication of a truly respectable character, whose conduct and principles have been basely vilified, to state thus publicly, that not one word ever fell from me which could, in the most remote degree, tend to support the accusations made against him, as the committees of the Lords and Commons well know. And I cannot but say, that the coupling of my name with that of a common informer, whose testimony was in direct opposition to mine, even as given in a celebrated report, is but a clumsy pretext for the traduction of virtue.

"S. NEILSON.

"New Prison, 3rd December, 1798."

Thus matters remained until the morning of the 16th of January, 1799, when our respective prisons were rummaged closely for papers at day-break. A ruffian of the name of Carleton happened to be sent to the prison where I was, and he carried away every scrap of paper he could lay his hands on in my room; indiscriminately bundling up my own private papers with those of several other persons, who had lain, and whose trunks were in the same room: most of these have never been returned, although repeatedly applied for.

Another month had elapsed, when, on the 18th of March, in the evening, fourteen of us received notice to prepare to go on board ship the next morning at six o'clock! No intimation of what further destination was intended—all we could tell our friends, if we had been given time to have seen them, was that we were to go on board ship in a few hours, but whether for Botany Bay, Siberia, or to be scuttled and sunk, was alike unknown to us. On this occasion our astonishment was beyond description; some of us really thought it might have been a piece of fun practised upon us by the gaoler—a kind of cruelty not unfrequent in these dreary abodes of safe custody. I was at this period confined to my bed by an intermittent fever, and having often experienced the most unexampled roughness from Gregg (the gaoler), I really imagined he was making an experiment upon my life. I was not able to write, but I immediately dictated the following letter to Lord Cornwallis:

"My Lord—I have received a message this moment from Mr. Cooke, through our gaoler, stating that I am to be removed to a ship to-morrow morning at six o'clock. I am astonished at this notice, so entirely contradictory to the faith of government solemnly pledged; for though I wish to go abroad, yet I would desire to settle (as we agreed upon) the place of exile and the accommodations on board. It must occur to your lordship that, at any rate, two or three days must be necessary to prepare for an eternal adieu to my native country, my wife and children. I thought the treatment I had received for the last seven years from government might have satiated any revenge, without

this additional piece of severity, and this additional breach of a solemn engagement. In the meantime, I request your lordship will have the goodness to state whether this order is authorised or not.

"I am, my lord, &c.,

"SAMUEL NEILSON.

"New Prison, 18th March, 1799."

This letter was sent to the Castle late that night, and the prisoners were sent on board ship the next morning!

Such is the narrative which I feel myself bound to leave with my countrymen. I have avoided argument as much as possible. I have not obtruded myself where it was not absolutely necessary; and I have not related a single word that is not strictly true, so far as my belief goes; and as to the facts within my own knowledge, I aver them to be strictly so. I therefore take leave of the subject for the present, with a consciousness of having discharged a most solemn duty in thus leaving a text for the future historian.

SAMUEL NEILSON.

The following narrative of the circumstances connected with the negotiations entered into between the government and the state prisoners, and the events which led to the writer's being a party to it, was drawn up by Thomas Russell at Fort George, and communicated in a letter to his brother, Captain John Russell. The document is literally copied from the original in the possession of his nephew, the late Captain Russell, to whom I am indebted for the use

of it: the only omissions in it are of those parts of the letter which relate to family affairs:

Fort George, 10th December, 1800.

As I have never given you any account of what took place between the government and myself during my imprisonment, and as I know what relates to me will, from the sentiments of blood and affection, interest you, I will briefly relate that which is in some degree of consequence to my country—I mean the agreement entered into by the state prisoners with government.

Understanding that there was a warrant for high treason issued against me, I surrendered to the Marquis of Downshire on the 16th September, 1796, in Belfast. According to every appearance the wish was, on the part of the gentlemen who that day conducted the arrests (Lords Downshire, Westmeath, and Castlereagh), that I should fly; for though the streets were filled with military, as if the town was to be given up to pillage, I was not noticed, though I was publicly in them, and even on the full Exchange, for two hours after my residence was occupied by the military and my papers seized by these noblemen. The same applies to my friend Samuel Neilson; we were the persons who were the principal objects of government, for on our surrender, which seemed to be unexpected, the arrests stopped. I was the last. I surrendered to the chief magistrate of the town, whom I met as I was on my way to my house, where the magistrates civil and military were assembled. I was introduced by him to the Marquis of Downshire as having surrendered to him. Lord Downshire said, pulling out some papers from

his pocket, "Mr. Russell, I have a warrant against you; it is for high treason." I answered, "My lord, it is indifferent to me what warrant you have against me, or whether you have any; if you have I shall not take the trouble of looking at it, for I have not the slightest curiosity on the subject." Here Neilson asked me, "Why did you not come before now: we have been waiting for you?" I answered, "I waited to read the newspapers." Shortly after this Lord Castlereagh entered, and we [1] (with eight or nine others) were put into separate chaises, and a dragoon with a cocked pistol as a companion in each; in this manner, escorted by a squadron of dragoons, we were conducted to Dublin without quitting the carriages. We were committed to different gaols and to separate apartments, prevented from having intercourse with any person, and denied the use of pens and ink. My prison was Newgate. After some time I was by two modes sounded, whether "I would consent to leave the country and go to England," which I peremptorily refused. I cannot affirm positively that this came from government, but I believe it did. By degrees the extreme strictness of confinement was relaxed, and different persons were allowed access. A very scandalous libel appeared against me in "The Sun," which I answered in the public prints, and at the same time apprised Mr. Cooke that I had done so. I should tell you that about a fortnight before my imprisonment I had published a pamphlet on the state of the country with my name annexed, and that shortly after I was in Newgate, I sent a copy of it to Mr. Cooke with my compliments, informing him that it

[1] T. R., and S. Neilson.

was written by me. He sent it back with "his compliments, that he had already read it." In time several of those arrested with me were, on different accounts, liberated. I wrote to Mr. Pelham requesting trial or liberation, and received for answer that I should be informed of the time of my trial as soon as possible. Towards the end of the summer of 1797, it was suggested to me by a gentleman to offer to give security for my good behaviour, and that, in that case, he had no doubt of obtaining my liberation; but that I refused, as implying that I had done something wrong, which I would never admit; he, however, did get a nobleman high in military command and in the full confidence of the government, and with whom I had no personal acquaintance, to apply to Mr. Pelham on the subject. Mr. Pelham spoke handsomely as to my private character, and said that to prevent any uneasiness my friends might feel, he would say that government had no specific charge against me, but from my public character and conduct were determined to keep me in prison during the war—at the same time expressing very exaggerated notions of my talents and influence: similar applications were made by others of my friends (among them by Mr. Kirwan, the philosopher) to Mr. Pelham and other members of the government, and similar answers returned. Thus I continued during the winter of 1797–8; in it Mr. Neilson was liberated, on account of his health,[1] and I was the only remaining prisoner (save one since dead) of those first arrested. Lord Castlereagh succeeded to Mr. Pelham in office, and I wrote to him stating the cir-

[1] By a medical certificate.

cumstances and demanding "trial, or to be liberated on bail." His lordship in his answer informed me, that "he had laid my application before the lord lieutenant, and that his excellency was sorry that the circumstances of the times did not permit of his complying with it." Thus I stood; and it is worthy of remark, as illustrative of the character of my countrymen and their fidelity to each other, that although there was at this period no person whom the government wished more to procure information against than myself, and though I was in the power of more individuals, particularly of that class whom it is the fashion to revile under the common epithets of common people and mob, than any man in my sphere of life, yet, as no information was obtained against me, in this manner I continued till July, 1798, when Mr. M. Byrne and Mr. O. Bond were under sentence of death. The day before Mr. Byrne was to be executed, Mr. Neilson showed me a paper, purporting that those who signed it agreed to give what information they individually possessed without implicating others, and to leave the country, provided the lives of Mr. Byrne and Mr. Bond were saved: in their fate was involved all those found in Mrs. Bond's house on the 12th of March. I expressed great repugnance at the idea. He urged the propriety of endeavouring to put a stop to the useless effusion of blood—that the turn the war in the country had taken rendered it expedient to endeavour to effect some general means of amnesty, which would put an end to unavailing exertion and misery. I declined entering on anything relating to the general state of the country, but declared myself willing to do anything or make any sacrifice, consistent

with my conscience and honour, to save the blood of any individual. I will here mention, that through the whole of the business I persisted in this distinction, for I was determined not to be accessary in advising any who had engaged in the contest to withdraw even for a moment from it, because I had and have the most perfect confidence of the easiness of accomplishing the object wished for by the people; and Mr. Neilson, and the three gentlemen who on the part of the prisoners finally concluded the business with government, appeared equally impressed with the necessity of the people being saved from the struggle. I mention this once for all, though out of the regular course of the narrative. In consequence of what Mr. Neilson proposed, the state prisoners on the side of the gaol we were confined in—in Newgate—assembled, and Mr. Dobbs and the two sheriffs were present. Mr. Dobbs took the same view of the subject as Mr. Neilson, urged the useless effusion of blood, and spoke of this as a measure which, if adopted, would probably put a stop to it; at the same time he declared, that the idea did not proceed from the government but from the prisoners. It so happened that I was looked to as the person first to sign. To you who know me it is needless to say how I felt, when I considered that my signing or not, when that signature which could injure myself only, might possibly be the means of preventing bloodshed. I said I would sign the paper if I were allowed "to write my object in so doing above my name." One of the sheriffs (Archer [1]) observed that in that case others would do the same, which would create

[1] "Such the name appears to be, so far as I can make it out." —Capt. Russell's Note.

great delay and difficulty; that it was growing late, and as the signatures were to be collected in the other prisons, and Mr. Byrne's execution was to take place the ensuing morning, and time would not be given to make the application to government. I then said I would call on Mr. Dobbs and the sheriffs to witness the spirit (since things were thus situated) in which I agreed to sign, which would be equivalent to my expressing it in writing: to this they perfectly acceded. I am not now positive if Mr. Sheriff Pasley was present at this time, but Mr. Archer and Mr. Dobbs were. I then said that it was evident from my long imprisonment (then nearly two years, and during which I often asked for a trial and had been refused) that I had nothing personal to apprehend; that for the same reason "I could have nothing to disclose; that my sole motive in signing was to save the blood of others; and that as a Christian I did, in the most solemn manner, call my God and Saviour, by whom I was to be judged, to witness, that if I were myself under sentence of death I would not sign that paper to save my life." The gentlemen in question declared that they considered this declaration the same as if I had written it above my name, and under this precise and acknowledged definition of my motives I signed the paper; and so terminated the greatest mental struggle I ever did, and I hope and believe ever will experience. The rest of the state prisoners present then signed, all declaring that they did it in the same spirit I had done. There was not one of them, so far as I knew or could judge, that did not think he thereby made a great personal sacrifice for the good of others; and so far as I could hear, I most firmly believe this sentiment was almost

universal among the subscribers; and they consisted of men of very different classes of society, intellect, and acquirements, but of equal patriotism and fortitude; and if ever a true account of the transaction becomes part of the history of our times and of our country, it will be recorded as an act of disinterestedness not often excelled. To any person who knew Ireland it would be superfluous to say, that the two prisoners, Mr. Byrne and Bond, were ready then, and on other occasions, to lay down their lives for the good of their country and mankind. The signatures (of the prisoners) in the other prisons were, with a few exceptions, obtained that night. I understand the whole proposition was considered the next day at a privy council. It, however, produced no effect, for after some short delay Mr. Byrne was executed. Mr. Bond's execution was to take place on the next day, Thursday. All the prisoners considered the paper as cancelled by the death (execution) of Mr. Byrne, and the death of Mr. Bond as inevitable. The government, however, acted differently. At three o'clock a respite arrived for Mr. Bond until Monday. On Friday morning Mr. Cooke and Mr. Dobbs came to Newgate, and while Mr. Cooke was with Mr. Bond, Mr. Dobbs, in conversing with one of the state prisoners, found that the idea was that the paper was no longer obligatory! This I learned by Mr. Dobbs coming up to where I was in the court, and telling me "he perceived there was some misunderstanding about the paper," conceiving the agreement to be cancelled by Mr. Byrne's death; I told him I declined entering into any conversation on the subject. He immediately said, "Then I must inform you that Mr. Bond's life is not safe; I will go and apprize Mr. Cooke." Mr.

Neilson came to me shortly after, and it was finally agreed by the state prisoners that they would abide by the former paper, notwithstanding the execution of Mr. B. A refusal, we thought, might endanger the survivor, and could in nowise benefit the deceased.

On Saturday we learned from Mr. Dobbs that government would not accede to the agreement, but proposed a paper of another sort. This, which was, as well as I can recollect, to disclose names in addition, was rejected with universal indignation. Mr. D. stated that, as the last effort, government would see some of the state prisoners, and perhaps the matter might be arranged between them. Messrs. O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven, who were confined in the other prisons, were mentioned, and it was asked if we had any objection to their communicating with government on the subject. This admitted of no objection, for it was perfectly understood that nothing they did was in any way binding on any individual of us, unless we afterwards agreed to it.

On Sunday these gentlemen came from the Castle to Newgate, with the paper as definitely agreed to on the part of government. This was discussed, and after many objections, signed by all in the prison who had signed the former paper, save two, whose principal reason for withdrawing seemed to be the death of Mr. Byrne; and this circumstance is worthy of note, for it shows that it was not personal fears or considerations which operated on the prisoners. Mr. Emmet, my intimate friend, and the other two gentlemen did then, and as often since as I heard them speak on the business, declare they had positively covenanted with government for a general amnesty to all who chose to accept

the same terms, and I have no doubt of the fact. Such is what I know of the negotiation.

On the 11th of September, we saw in "The Courier," a London paper, a copy of a bill then passing the Irish parliament, in which the names of the subscribers were included, with one assertion, that they had confessed their guilt, retracted their opinions, and implored pardon. This was the first intimation we had of a measure which so materially affected us: this may serve as an instance to show what was the state of Ireland. Why the government took such a step I cannot determine; I have no doubt, however, that they will one day be convinced that justice and policy are inseparable. Mr. Neilson wrote a letter immediately to "The Courier," denying the assertions of the bill, and this he enclosed to Lord Castlereagh, apprising him of his intention the next day, which was the 12th of September. Mr. Cooke called on him, and informed him that the lord lieutenant was determined, "in case of such a publication, to go on with the executions as before." Mr. Neilson conceived that it was better to suffer under the calumny than, by vindicating ourselves, be the occasion of the loss of a single life. In this I did and do agree with him. Mr. Dobbs, who expressed a regard for me, called on me some time after this, to speak to me on the subject of my own case, and he expressed himself anxious that my imprisonment, which had continued so long, should be terminated as soon as possible, and gave me to understand that government were not indisposed to the measure. He wished me to state, in a letter to him, in what manner I was willing to fulfil my engagement of leaving the country. I stated three months to be at large to settle my affairs, and then to emigrate

to such country as should be agreed on between government and myself, and for the execution of this I would give whatever security they demanded. He let me understand that government would be satisfied with my word only, that during my stay I would not interfere in politics. I declined entering into any verbal agreement, which might be liable to misunderstanding, but stated that I would give bail to any amount to surrender myself to government at twenty-four hours' notice, during the three months of my stay, and this he desired me to state in a letter to him. I am not sure whether all this took place in one or in more conversations. This letter, which he was to lay before government, I wrote; and as this was an opportunity of expressing myself (so as by no possibility to affect others) with respect to the bill above mentioned, I did in this letter deny its assertions. The passage in which I alluded to it was, as well as I recollect, as follows: I said that it was necessary to state, as well in justice to government as to myself, I had never retracted any political opinion, or confessed any political guilt, for politically I had always acted according to the best of my judgment, and agreeably to the dictates of my conscience; that in signing the "Paper" I had only had in view saving the blood of others—for I had then been nearly two years in prison, and had often demanded a trial, which was refused me. I say, as well as I recollect, for on the . . . before daylight in the morning, my room in Newgate was entered by a Mr. Carleton, attended by soldiers, and all the papers I had there seized, by order of government. Among them were copies of all my letters to government and their answers, and I have never been able to procure

their restoration since, nor one of those seized in 1796 by the Marquis of Downshire, though none of them were of any consequence save to myself. The seizure of papers from the state prisoners was general in the different prisons. I do not recollect whether it was before or after this that Mr. Marsden, one of the under secretaries of state, came to the prisons, and informed the state prisoners from the lord lieutenant that all should be allowed to emigrate conformable to the agreement, except sixteen, whose names he read from a paper, and among which mine was one. "His excellency was stated to be sorry that the circumstances of the times did not enable him to include them in the liberation, but he hoped soon to be able to do so." I have nothing to add, but that on the 18th of March, 1799, Mr. Gregg, the keeper of Newgate, came about four o'clock in the day to my room, and said he was sorry to inform me that government had determined I was to go on board ship the next morning at six o'clock. At that hour the next day I was sent on board, with fifteen other state prisoners, and sailed that night without the least surmise as to the place of our destination. Here,[1] however, we were sent, and here we are likely to remain during the present administration.

It may be matter of curiosity to my friends to know that Mr. Cooke, in a conversation with Mr. Neilson and Bond, after the conclusion of the agreement, said "that government had then sufficient evidence to convict me, but that they were ashamed to bring me to trial after so long an imprisonment." I have only to add, that during the whole of it (my imprisonment), and setting

[1] Fort George, in Inverness-shire.

the justice or injustice of it aside, I have always been treated by government, and by those in whose charge they placed me, with respect and propriety.

N.B.—All the main points of this are certainly correct; but as the whole is done from memory, some of the lesser circumstances may not be precisely stated in the same order or manner as they occurred.

T. R.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER OF T. RUSSELL TO HIS BROTHER, JOHN RUSSELL (FATHER OF THE LATE CAPTAIN RUSSELL).

Fort George, 10th December, 1800.

Accompanying this you will likewise receive a statement of what has occurred between government and myself, at the time of and since my imprisonment. The whole will, I am sure, be interesting to my friends. That part of it which relates to the agreement entered into with government will be interesting on other accounts, as a true statement, so far as my knowledge goes, of a transaction much misrepresented. It was written in a hurry, but I have not time to correct it.

Respecting the principles for which I am in prison, I have only to say that my conviction of its rectitude, and my determination in every vicissitude of life to persevere in its support, every day augments. The numbers who have fallen, and among them many great and good, only in my judgment imposes a greater obligation on the survivors to persevere in the great cause. In promoting the good of my country, I am certain I was promoting that of mankind; for the true interests of nations, any more than of individuals, never depends on the ruin of others, though the detestable

converse of this is the fashionable cant of the day, even among those who profess patriotism. Even those infatuated people who vainly struggle against the progress of liberty, and who, if they persist, will be crushed in the unstable fabrics of crooked policy, would find their advantage in co-operating in the general good of mankind. Whatever attempts are made (and every effort, I fear, will be made) to extinguish liberty or to retard her progress, I have no doubt of her ultimate and speedy success. One of the great errors of the times seems to me to be the supposing that the present contest will or can terminate like former ones. A contest which embraces every quarter of the globe, which embraces the fate of the human race, is not a contest for relative power or riches, whatever momentary hues it may assume, but is a contest between the two principles of despotism and liberty, and can only terminate in the extinction of one or the other, and reason and religion leave me no doubt which will triumph; and believe me, that so far as I am capable of judging, the sacred volume, in which I have always found support and consolation, evidently points out the impending vengeance of Almighty God on those individuals and those nations who obstinately persist in supporting injustice and tyranny, by fraud, cruelty, and superstition. Neither can I so far conform to the notion that usurpation is defensible, because the usurper possesses great talents, or uses his power with clemency; for the most corrupt motives may impel him to such conduct, and the principle is utterly destructive of law and liberty. Every government, however abominable, may declare they act for the good of the people, who are not wise enough to act for themselves; and God alone can

judge the heart. He made men equal. Every departure from his laws is folly and confusion; and the records of history show that the departing from this law has been the cause of the calamities of mankind. So much for my opinions.

I have nothing to tell of myself or situation. I have only to say that my health is perfectly good, and the prison (abstracted from the separation from our friends) better than I have been in. We are well lodged, dieted, have a good place of exercise, and are treated with respect: we are very fortunate in our governor, Colonel Stuart; he is a gentleman who, if somewhat older, might put you in mind of our father; he unites politeness and humanity with a strict discharge of his duty. I must say that I have always been treated with respect and attention on the part of government since my first imprisonment: this is but justice. My fellow-prisoners are all well. I have great pleasure in the society of my friend Emmet's delightful family.

I have not the honour of Mr. Fox's acquaintance: from the regard which, I saw by the public papers, he manifested for Lord E. Fitzgerald, and that which I know Lord Edward had for him, I enclose you a lock of his hair, which I beg you will present, or have presented to him (if you do not know him) with my respects. I judged it might be acceptable, if he was not already possessed of one. I was confined in Newgate when he was brought in, and I was the only friend who saw him from that time, except his brother, a few hours before his death (irreparable loss to his friends and his country). I had not the good fortune of personally knowing him until after my own imprisonment. So much information, modesty, disinterestedness, and virtue,

I never saw combined. To those who know him it is useless to speak of his character. I was with him most of the first night of his imprisonment, till I was separated from him by order of government. He was the same that night as ever I had seen him, although he had lost much blood. I saw him but once after, and he was the same. He was given in charge to a captain of foot, so that there was no way of seeing him; but I heard of him every hour of the day. I need only add, his death was like his life. From what I have often heard him say of Mr. Fox, I am sure there was no person whom he would more wish to have a memorial of him; and that circumstance, were there no other, could not fail of giving me a high idea of that gentleman's character. It may, perhaps, be interesting to state that the death of Lord Edward did not seem to proceed from his wounds, but from an inflammation and water on his lungs.[1]

(Signed) THOS. RUSSELL.

The first reason alleged by government for detaining the state prisoners after their satisfactory fulfilment of the engagement they had entered into, was the objections thrown in the way of their emigration to the United States by the American minister, Mr. Rufus King. Their republican principles, strange to say, appeared to the accredited agent of the American republic an objection to their becoming citizens of the latter.

[1] The two preceding letters were transmitted through the regular official channels.

Another pretext was founded on a rumour of a new conspiracy having been entered into, a short time before their removal to Fort George, by some of the prisoners. These rumours were industriously circulated; and the breach of faith which they had experienced was certainly not calculated to prevent the danger of such a *denouement.*

The infamous spy system was carried even into the gaols; and the tempters there found a favourable field on some occasions to promote their nefarious schemes.

James Hope, the confidential friend of Neilson, subsequently to the liberation of the latter, asked him the cause of the prisoners being removed from the Irish prisons to Fort George. Neilson said the only cause that he was aware of, with respect to the conduct of the prisoners, was the following: Some of them had given offence by publishing letters in the papers, disclaiming acts ascribed to them; and others, in conversation, had expressed regret that they had signed the agreement, and discussed amongst themselves the subject of the probable success of an insurrection in the existing state of the country. One of the prisoners, Ivers, had taken notes of the latter conversation (for what purpose Neilson did not state); and soon afterwards a rigorous search was instituted in the several prisons, the papers of all the prison-

ers were seized, and, amongst the rest, the notes of the conversation drawn up by Ivers. This took place in the autumn of 1798.

In the diary of John Sweetman, wherein references are made to all matters of importance to himself and his fellow-prisoners, from the 12th of March, 1798, the date of his arrest, to the 13th of December, names of persons, and mention of matters connected with them, are set down in a very brief form, as memoranda, to recall the recollection of details. The date, 27th of July, 1798, is prefixed to the following mention of two names, "Thomas Reynolds and Ivers." With regard to the publication of the letter signed "A. O'Connor, T. A. Emmet, and W. J. Macneven," in the Dublin papers, in the month of August following, the proceedings in parliament afford sufficient proof of the disposition to deprive the prisoners of the benefit of the compact entered into with them, had any subsequent act of theirs afforded even the shadow of a pretext for dealing with them with the utmost rigour of the law. On the 27th of August the Hon. Francis Hutchinson brought before the House of Commons the subject of the advertisement signed by three of the state prisoners, disclaiming the terms in which the government stated mercy had been extended to these traitors; and concluded a speech of extraordinary virulence by moving that the printers

of "Saunders's News Letter" and "The Hibernian Journal" be brought before the House. Mr. Barrington (Sir Jonah) condemned the insolence of the publication in the strongest language. Mr. Plunket censured the advertisement. Mr. John Blaquier spoke to the same effect; Mr. Egan followed on the same side. Mr. Vandeleur said that the three persons who had signed it should be immediately brought to trial for their treasons; they had forfeited all claims to mercy. Mr. M'Naghten suggested that they should be all handed over to the courts-martial. Mr. Osborne opposed any such proceeding.

The printer of "The Hibernian Journal" next day was called up, and said that "the advertisement had been brought to Mrs. M'Donnell by two gentlemen, and paid for with three half-crowns by Mr. Cornelius M'Loughlin, merchant, of Usher's Island, and Mr. Lewis Lyons, of Arran-quay." Major Sirr was called, and said that he had gone to Kilmainham; that O'Connor did not acknowledge the publication, but Emmet and Macneven did. They were then confined separately.

August 29th. Cornelius M'Loughlin and Lewis Lyons were called to the bar. Mr. M'Loughlin said that the Sunday before he walked with Lyons into the country, and being

near Kilmainham they called to see Mr. R. Dillon, who was confined there, having commercial transaction to speak of with him. Coming from the yard where Dillon was, met the three gentlemen alluded to, who invited him into their room, and producing the advertisement, it was read by one of them; he did not know which of them requested, as he was going into town, to leave it at the offices of the two papers, and also at that of "The Evening Post." He never had any intercourse with any of the three persons whose names are signed to it, except so far as an acquaintance with their persons, and the common civility of a passing salute; but solemnly declared he had no such object as the house imputed to his conduct. Lyons gave similar information. Mr. M'Naghten moved that both gentlemen should be committed to Newgate. The Hon. Mr. Annesley seconded the motion. Sir John Blaquier supported the motion; Mr. Barrington also.

Lord Castlereagh opposed the motion in a temperate speech, recommending moderation, and endeavouring to impress the House with his view of the matter—namely, that it was the comments of the newspapers, and not the conduct of the government, that had been called in question by the prisoners. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Laurence Parsons spoke

to the same effect. Mr. Egan retracted his former opinion. On a division, twenty-seven were against the motion, and sixteen for it.[1]

When the determination of the government to remove the state prisoners from the several gaols in Dublin and Belfast to another part of the kingdom was announced to them, on the 18th of March, 1799, Neilson was then labouring under fever, confined to his bed, and his recovery hardly expected by his companions in misfortune. In this state, Neilson, notwithstanding his urgent solicitation to be allowed a little time to prepare for his departure, and in the hope of being better able, in a few weeks, to encounter the fatigue and hazard of removal, was sent on board ship. His condition is described by Dr. Dickson, in his Narrative:

> Our destination (to me, at least) was perfectly unknown, till after our arrival in Scotland. Sometimes, indeed, the state of the unhappy Neilson, one of our number, silenced every tongue and wounded every heart. A severe fever, under which he had long laboured in Dublin, and notwithstanding the continuance of which he had been barbarously embarked with the other prisoners, had rendered him not only weak, but completely delirious. This weakness and delirium still continued, and were not entirely removed till long after our arrival at Fort George.[2]

[1] Irish Parliamentary Debates.

[2] Dr. William Steele Dickson's Narrative of his Confinement and Exile, p. 109.

NOTES FROM THE DIARY OF JOHN SWEETMAN, RESPECTING THE COMPACT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE STATE PRISONERS.

(For this valuable document I am indebted to the late John Sweetman, Esq., son of Mr. Sweetman.)

On the 12th of March, 1798, I was arrested at Francis-street by Captain Atkinson, with a guard of thirty soldiers, and brought to the Castle; at night removed to the Custom House under escort.

13th. Committed to Kilmainham, under warrant of the privy council.

17th. Confined to our rooms, but permitted to dine and breakfast together.

28th May. Served with notice of trial.

24th July. Mr. Dobbs, Sheriff Archer, and Crawford waited on the prisoners at Kilmainham, with a paper which had been signed by the other prisoners at Newgate and Bridewell, except the O'Connors, professing to make discoveries of the progress and state of the rebellion, on the conditions of saving the lives of Bond and Byrne, and being freed from prosecution—the subscribers to emigrate; which was signed.

25th. Byrne was executed notwithstanding; and on the next evening Dobbs called on us to state that the paper signed the day before was now a nullity, as Byrne was executed; and desired to know would we still abide by the paper if Bond's life was spared; to which we assented.

26th. Bond respited until Monday.

27th. Mr. Cooke called upon some of the prisoners

who had signed—viz., Emmet, Macneven, Jackson, John Sweetman, Thomas Reynolds, and Ivers.

28th. Mr. Dobbs received a letter from Mr. Cooke, stating that, in consequence of his interview with the prisoners, he was persuaded it was not their intention to give the full and candid information as required by the paper; and that Mr. Bond's execution could not be postponed, unless the gentlemen would give government unequivocal proof of the sincerity of their intentions. Whereupon it was agreed that three persons should wait on Lord Castlereagh to remove the difficulties and explain, when Thomas A. Emmet and W. J. Macneven were dispatched from Kilmainham, and O'Connor from Bridewell.

29th. The above-named had an interview at the Castle with Lord Castlereagh, the lord chancellor, and Mr. Cooke; which was satisfactory. They brought home an order for the admission of our friends.

30th. We were admitted to the gaol at large, our solitary confinement having lasted twenty weeks.

Aug. 27th. Three of the persons examined before the secret committees, finding that their evidence had been misrepresented in the prints, published an advertisement justifying themselves. It creates an astonishing noise; the government resent it; and Major Sirr is sent to put us once more in solitary confinement. We contrive, however, to be two together, and Emmet and I are chums.

Sept. 6th. Oliver Bond died; said to be at four in the morning. Inquest sat at three, p. m.; verdict—"Nothing on the body seemed to indicate that he died of other than a natural death—probably of apoplexy."

Macneven, Emmet, and O'Connor summoned before

the Lords' secret committee, and signed a paper containing what they conceived to be the substance of their examination before the two committees, Lords and Commons.

Nov. 4th. Mr. Thomas Braughall was liberated, having given bail, himself in £1,000, and two sureties in £500.

Nov. 18th, Sunday. This evening Theobald Wolfe Tone died at the prevot in the barracks, at 7 o'clock.

Oct. 17th, 1798. Mr. Cooke was here (Kilmainham) with Messrs. O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven. He stated, I understood, that he was commanded by the lord lieutenant to inform the gentlemen, that during the present existing circumstances no leave could be given for any person to go to any part of Europe, and that they must either go to America, giving bail, or stay here during the war. This message, though not desired to be stated to the prisoners, but as an answer to letters written to the lord lieutenant by the three persons before mentioned—is considered general.

Oct. 22nd. At 4 o'clock, Mr. Marsden announced to such persons as were preparing to go to America to suspend their intentions for a few days; but, nevertheless, if there were any who were prepared and wished to depart in the interim, they were at liberty to do so.

It is to be remarked that Mr. Cooke's letter of Saturday, to O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven, states that the prisoners are at liberty to charter a ship which will not be delayed for convoy; and that another letter to the prisoners at the three gaols engages, on the part of government, that such prisoners as choose to go to America by the vessel now taking in at Larne, shall be conveyed there as soon as they signify their intention.

Dublin Castle, 20th October, 1798.

"SIR—I request you will inform such prisoners in your custody as have signed the agreement with government, and can give a security for complying with the terms thereof, that a vessel is now at Larne, which will be ready to sail in a few days for America; and that those who can settle their affairs so as to take a passage in her shall be sent from hence to where she lies.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"ALEXANDER MARSDEN.

P. S. O.

"To the Keeper of the Gaol of Newgate."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM JOHN SWEETMAN, ADDRESSED TO MR. COOKE [NO DATE].

. . . When I consider the sacrifices I have made to fulfil my engagements with government—that I have sold my property, and the most of it at two-thirds of the value; that I have torn up everything in this country; disposed of my children with the views of an expatriated father; that I have transacted my relations with the public under the various circumstances of imprisonment, and have ceased to trouble government with any application, either to alleviate them or on any other account; that my health is so considerably impaired, and the season to change climate so rapidly passing over, I feel myself compelled to address you a third time, and request to be permitted to proceed to a southern country in Europe not at war with the king. And I do so with the more confidence because the measures before stated were undertaken for the express purpose of carrying into effect an agreement which I had signed, and

which I had repeated assurances would in all its conditions be liberally interpreted. . . .

LETTER OF JOHN SWEETMAN [NO ADDRESS—PROBABLY TO MR. MARSDEN].

Sir—At my arrest on the 12th of March, by Mr. Atkinson and the guards, a large quantity of my papers were seized and brought to the Castle. As I apprehend they are no longer useful to the government, I request you will obtain order for them to be restored to me. It is not without some reluctance I apply to you, to whom I am an utter stranger, nor until I had made several attempts through the medium of another person in the department, Mr. Cooke, all of which have not only been unsuccessful, but have been attended with circumstances of marked indifference. How far my situation, or the want of innate generosity, have betrayed that gentleman into a conduct so harsh and uncivil I am at a loss to determine.

If this inattention was meant to hurt my feelings, I will only say he has not done it at any easy expense, for the price is no less than forfeiture of all title to common politeness. From your character I expect other treatment.

As to the arrangement of government respecting the state prisoners, which you communicated to us yesterday, I cannot omit this opportunity to declare that I consider it a direct breach of the agreement entered into with the lord lieutenant, which I was repeatedly assured would be liberally interpreted.

(Signed) J. S.

EXTRACTS FROM JOHN SWEETMAN'S DIARY.

Monday, March 18th, 1799.—Received notice from the Castle at five o'clock in the evening, by young Godfrey, that the following prisoners, who had been confined in Kilmainham, were to be put on board ship the next morning at six o'clock—viz., Thomas Emmet, John Sweetman, John Chambers, Joseph Cuthbert, John Cormick, George Cumming.

Upon asking Godfrey where or how we were to be embarked, or the places we were to be sent to, he informed us he could not tell, or form any opinion on the subject. On remonstrating with him on the cruelty of sending us off in so precipitate a manner, and that we wished to apply to the lord lieutenant, he said all he could do was to bear any letters we might wish to send.

Emmet and I wrote to the lord lieutenant, others to Lord Castlereagh, to which we received no answers. In consequence of the writ of *ne exeat regno* issued against me by the lord chancellor, the high sheriff called at the gaol, and bade the gaoler not give me up to government without the money, £1,000, was paid. His first visit was early in the day. He called in the evening and repeated it; he called again, and added that a lock should be put on my room door, and that if the governor persisted, they should be obliged to break open the doors and take me by force and arms. Thus it remained until half-past ten, when I was informed by the gaoler that I was to go, and that he was authorised to give me up by the high sheriff. I mentioned to Mr. Godfrey that a *ne exeat regno* was issued against me; he answered, "Let government and the judicial power settle it between them." At half-past six the next morning we

were hurried off under a guard of the Buckinghamshire of 120 men, among whom were several horse, with Mr. Godfrey on horseback. About half an hour before this Hudson was informed, for the first time, that he must accompany us; he made the seventh, and was in the second coach with Emmet, Chambers, and me. About nine we arrived at the Pigeon House, where we found the two O'Connors, Sweeny, Russell, and Dowdall. Breakfast was prepared at the Pigeon House, and about eleven we were put on board boats; seventy men and two officers of the Angusshire being sent off to the ship before us. Swan, Atkinson, Godfrey, and Sirr attended us to the beach-side. A little after we reached the vessel, the "Ashton Smith" of Caernarvon, commanded by Morris Roberts—the "Townsend," revenue cutter, being astern of us as convoy. We remained here till the night tide, when we sailed. Several of our friends came on board in the course of the day.

A brief notice of the writer of the preceding statement, from data furnished to me by his son, will not be considered misplaced in this memoir.

NOTICE OF JOHN SWEETMAN.

This gentleman was an eminent and opulent citizen of Dublin, of an old and highly respectable family. He carried on with great success the business of a brewer in Francis-street, had taken an active part in the management of the affairs of the Catholic Committee in 1792 and 1793, and was one of the delegates of the Catholic Convention, whose proceedings resulted in the partial relief act of 1793.

John Sweetman of Francis-street, member of the Leinster Directory of United Irishmen, was the son of Michael Sweetman, by Mary, daughter of Patrick Sweetman, Esq., of Stephen's-green, brewer. He was born about 1752, and married in 1784 Miss Maryanne Atkinson, daughter of Edward Atkinson, Esq., brewer, of Dublin. He died in Dublin, May, 1826, aged seventy-four, and was buried in Swords. He left issue: 1. John, born in 1785, who married in 1806 Miss Maria Sweetman, his cousin, daughter of William Sweetman, Esq., of Raheny, died 1855, aged seventy, and was buried in Glasnevin cemetery. He left issue: Edward Sweetman, Esq., of Raheny, and a daughter who became a nun, both of whom are living. 2. Mary (sister of John Sweetman, senior), died unmarried in 1814 or 1815.

The business of a brewer was an hereditary pursuit in the Sweetman family of Dublin, for upwards of a century. In the Dublin Directory for 1761 (the first in which the names and addresses of the Dublin merchants and traders are given), we find four brewers of the name of Sweetman: "Michael Sweetman, brewer, of Hawkins-street" (father of John Sweetman the subject of this notice); "Patrick Sweetman, brewer, of Stephen's-green;" "John Sweetman, brewer, of King-street, Stephen's-green;" and "William Sweetman, brewer, of Aston's-quay."

Some remains of the extensive buildings of the old brewery in Stephen's-green of Patrick Sweetman, the maternal grandfather of Patrick Sweetman, still exist at the rere of the College of Surgeons (the site of the Quakers' place of burial), immediately facing Lamb's-lane.

Patrick Sweetman had two daughters. The eldest married John Sweetman of Francis-street. The youngest married Valentine Browne, Esq., whose only daughter by this marriage, Margaret, married, in 1761, Nicholas Lawless, Esq., then engaged "in the banking and woollen trades," subsequently first Lord Cloncurry. The above-named Patrick Sweetman and his wife and daughter Margaret—Mrs. V. Browne—are buried in the old burial-place of Kilbarrack on the Howth road, about five miles from Dublin, close to the grave of a man whose infamy is never likely to be forgotten, Mr. Francis Higgins,[1] of blood-money notoriety—of whom more hereafter.

The aunt of John Sweetman, Mrs. Browne, was the mother of the wife of Nicholas Lawless, Esq., first Lord Cloncurry.

John Sweetman was a man of high intelligence, sound judgment, and sober, well-considered opinions, strongly attached to the rights

[1] Francis Higgins, by the inscription on his tombstone, would have been born in 1746. He died, it is stated, in January, 1802, aged fifty-six. But I have reason to believe he was born in 1744, and consequently died at the age of fifty-eight.—R. R. M.

and interests of his country as they were understood and acted on conformably. Of his integrity there seems to have been but one opinion entertained—all his associates placed entire confidence in him.

His connection with the Cloncurry family throws some light on the introduction of the Hon. Valentine Browne Lawless, subsequently Lord Cloncurry, into the society and directory of the Leinster United Irishmen. In his memoirs—2nd ed., p. 38—his lordship says: "In the autumn of 1797 I was elected—though without my desire, or even knowledge—a member of the executive directory of the United Irishmen, when, for the first and only time, I attended a meeting held at Mr. Jackson's in Church-street." Lord Chancellor Clare was very anxious to get John Sweetman hanged in 1793, as secretary of a meeting of the Catholic committee, on the plea of the proceedings of that body being connected with the views and objects of the Defenders.

That clumsy attempt to get rid of an eminent and energetic Catholic leader failed. Another attempt of a more wily kind was made by that amiable man, Mr. Thomas Reynolds, a few days before the meeting at Bond's on the 12th of March, 1798, and was defeated only by the prudence and sagacity of his intended victim. Immediately after that meeting, however, John Sweetman was arrested, thrown into prison, and

kept in close confinement, till, having entered into the compact with the government of which he has given the account inserted in the preceding pages, he was sent to Fort George with the other state prisoners, and detained there till 1802, when he went into banishment with his associates. About 1820 he was permitted to return to his native country, where he lived in privacy, but in honour and esteem, to the end of his career in 1826.